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The
JUNIOR BIBLE

AN AMERICAN TRANSLATION

EDITED BY
EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

Illustrated by
FRANK DOBIAS

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1948

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By J. M. Powis Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed
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To

CORNELIA,
SARAH and
PRISCILLA

with the hope that this book may
help them to enjoy the Bible.

INTRODUCTION

THE BIBLE HAS MANY ASPECTS, but we must never forget that among other things it is a book to enjoy. The present volume undertakes to gather up the parts of the Bible that are of most interest to young people from ten to fifteen years of age, in the hope that, by reading them, they may develop a fondness for the Bible that they will never lose. The text used is the American translation, which is especially designed to be understood by American youth. We have followed its abundant punctuation and paragraphing, which make it so much easier to read and understand than the older forms of translation. To help the reader to understand these stories and speeches, a brief introduction has been provided with each selection.

The illustrations, by Frank Dobias, have been designed to stimulate interest in the selections and help in the understanding of them. For the beauty of the page and type we must thank Miss Doris S. Patee, of the Macmillan Company, and Miss Mary D. Alexander of the University of Chicago Press, who has consulted with her. Superintendent J. Roy Skiles, of the Public Schools of Evanston, Illinois, Miss Mildred Bachelder, Juvenile Librarian of the American Library Association, and the Reverend Norris L. Tibbetts, of Chicago, have also helped me with their counsel. Mr. Donald P. Bean, of the

INTRODUCTION

University of Chicago Press has also furthered the book in many ways. And I must mention with particular gratitude Professor Frank M. McKibben, of Northwestern University, who first suggested this book to me and outlined a plan for it.

My brother, Charles T. B. Goodspeed, has greatly helped me by reading the book through in proof.

The thing we all most earnestly hope is that this little book will interest everybody who reads it in going on and reading the rest of the Bible. My *Story of the Bible* can be used as a guide by those who wish to read the books in the order in which they were written, and in the light of the situations that called them forth.

EDGAR J. GOODSPEED

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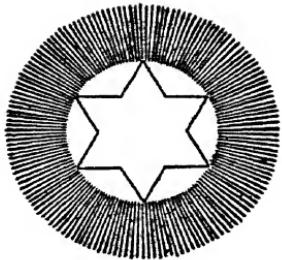
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THE OLD TESTAMENT

If in the Old Testament you see nothing but history, and read that Adam was made out of mud, that his wife was unobtrusively taken from his side while he slept; that the serpent tempted her with forbidden fruit, that God walked in the cool of the evening; and that a guard was placed at the gates of Paradise to keep the fugitives from returning,—would you not fancy the whole thing a fable from Homer's workshop?—But under those wrappings,— Good heavens! What splendid wisdom lies concealed!

—ERASMUS



THE CREATION

The question of how the world began and where we all came from comes at some time or other to everybody. The old Hebrews answered it with the story of Creation. They saw in the order of nature the working of one great mind and will, which they called God. He ruled not only over their little country but all countries, for he had made them all. Heaven and earth were full of his glory. Out of Chaos he had brought order and life. Light and darkness, sea and land, plants and trees, sun, moon and stars, birds, beasts and fish—all were his handiwork. Finally he had made man, in his own image, and given it all to him to enjoy.

Other ancient peoples had their stories of creation, but the Hebrews described it as covering six days, with a seventh day of rest, on which even God himself rested from all his work. So man too must have his day of rest, or his life will become one long round of wearisome toil. It would be hard to find another

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story in the whole world that shows so much observation, reflection and feeling.

WHEN GOD BEGAN TO CREATE the heavens and the earth, the earth was a desolate waste, with darkness covering the abyss and a tempestuous wind raging over the surface of the waters. Then God said,

“Let there be light!”

And there was light; and God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness night. Evening came, and morning, the first day.

Then God said,

“Let there be a firmament in the middle of the waters to divide the waters in two!”

And so it was. God made the firmament, dividing the waters that were below the firmament from those that were above it; and God called the firmament sky. Evening came, and morning, the second day.

Then God said,

“Let the waters below the sky be gathered into one place so that the dry land may appear!”

And so it was. God called the dry land earth, and the gathered waters seas. God saw that it was good.

Then God said,

“Let the earth produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants and the various kinds of fruit-trees that bear fruit containing their seed!”

And so it was. The earth brought forth vegetation, the vari-

THE CREATION

ous kinds of seed-bearing plants and the various kinds of trees that bear fruit containing their seed. God saw that it was good. Evening came, and morning, the third day.

Then God said,

“Let there be luminaries in the firmament of the sky to separate day from night; let them serve for signs, for fixed times, and for days and years; and let them serve as luminaries in the firmament of the sky to shed light on the earth!”

And so it was. God made the two great luminaries, the greater luminary to rule the day and the smaller one to rule the night—and the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the sky to shed light on the earth, to rule by day and by night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. Evening came, and morning, the fourth day.

Then God said,

“Let the waters teem with shoals of living creatures, and let birds fly over the earth across the firmament of the sky!”

And so it was. God created the great sea-monsters and all the various kinds of living, gliding creatures with which the waters teem, and all the various kinds of winged birds. God saw that it was good, and God blessed them, saying,

“Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters in the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth!”

Evening came, and morning, the fifth day.

Then God said,

“Let the earth bring forth the various kinds of living creatures, the various kinds of domestic animals, reptiles, and wild beasts of the earth!”

And so it was. God made the various kinds of wild beasts of the earth, the various kinds of domestic animals, and all the

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various kinds of land reptiles; and God saw that it was good.

Then God said,

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the domestic animals, the wild beasts, and all the land reptiles!”

So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; he created both male and female. Then God blessed them, and God said to them,

“Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the domestic animals, and all the living things that crawl on the earth!”

Further, God said,

“See, I give you all the seed-bearing plants that are found all over the earth, and all the trees which have seed-bearing fruit; it shall be yours to eat. To all the wild beasts of the earth, to all the birds of the air, and to all the land reptiles, in which there is a living spirit, I give all the green plants for food.”

And so it was. God saw that all that he had made was very good. Evening came, and morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their host. On the seventh day God brought his work to an end on which he had been engaged, desisting on the seventh day from all his work in which he had been engaged. So God blessed the seventh day, and consecrated it, because on it he had desisted from all his work, in doing which God had brought about creation.



THE CREATION OF MAN AND HIS FALL

The Hebrews felt that man was not just like stars and plants and animals; he had a moral nature. They described the dawn of this nature in the story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. They believed firmly in right and wrong and explained all the hardships and suffering in human life as springing from wrong-doing.

AT THE TIME WHEN THE LORD GOD made the earth and the heavens, there were as yet no field shrubs on the earth, and no field plants had as yet sprung up; for the Lord God had sent no rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the soil—although a flood used to rise from the earth and water all the surface of the ground. Then the Lord God molded man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that man became a living being. Then the Lord God

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planted a garden in Eden, to the east, and put there the man whom he had molded. Out of the ground the Lord God made all sorts of trees grow that were pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

There was a river flowing out of Eden to water the garden, and leaving there it divided into four branches; the name of the first being Pishon (the one which encircles all the land of Havilah, where there is gold—the gold of that land is fine—and bdellium and onyx stone); the name of the second river, Gihon (the one which encircles all the land of Cush); the name of the third river, the Tigris (the one which flows east of Ashur); and the name of the fourth river, the Euphrates.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and look after it; and the Lord God laid this command upon the man:

“From every tree in the garden you are free to eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you must not eat; for the day that you eat of it you shall certainly die.”

Then the Lord God said,

“It is not good for the man to be alone; I must make a helper for him who is like him.”

So the Lord God molded out of the ground all the wild beasts and all the birds of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man should call each living creature, that was to be its name. So the man gave names to all the domestic animals, the birds of the air, and all the wild beasts; but for man himself no helper was found who was like him. Then the Lord God had a trance fall upon the man; and when he had gone to sleep, he took one of his ribs,

THE CREATION OF MAN AND HIS FALL

closing up its place with flesh. The rib which he took from the man the Lord God built up into a woman, and brought her to the man, whereupon the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bone,
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called woman,
For from man was she taken.”

(That is why a man leaves his father and mother, and clings to his wife, so that they form one flesh.)

Both of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they felt no shame.

Now the serpent was the most clever of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made.

“And so God has said that you are not to eat from any tree of the garden?” he said to the woman.

“From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat,” the woman said to the serpent; “it is only concerning the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden that God has said, ‘You may not eat any of it, nor touch it, lest you die.’ ”

But the serpent said to the woman,

“You would not die at all; for God knows that the very day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods who know good from evil.”

So when the woman realized that the tree was good for food and attractive to the eye, and further, that the tree was desirable for its gift of wisdom, she took some of its fruit, and ate it; she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves girdles. But when they heard the sound of the Lord

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God taking a walk in the garden for the breezes of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. The Lord God called to the man.

“Where are you?” he said to him.

“I heard the sound of you in the garden,” he replied, “and I was afraid, because I was naked; so I hid myself.”

“Who told you that you were naked?” he said. “Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?”

The man said,

“The woman whom you set at my side, it was she who gave me fruit from the tree; so I ate it.”

Then the Lord God said to the woman,

“What ever have you done?”

The woman said,

“It was the serpent that misled me, and so I ate it.”

So the Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,

The most cursed of all animals shall you be,

And of all wild beasts.

On your belly you shall crawl, and eat dust,

As long as you live.

I will put enmity between you and the woman,

And between your posterity and hers;

They shall attack you in the head,

And you shall attack them in the heel.”

To the woman he said,

“I will make your pain at childbirth very great;

In pain shall you bear children;

And yet you shall be devoted to your husband,

While he shall rule over you.”

THE CREATION OF MAN AND HIS FALL

And to the man he said,

“Because you followed your wife’s suggestions, and ate from
the tree from which I commanded you not to eat,

Cursed shall be the ground through you,

In suffering shall you gain your living from it as long as
you live;

Thorns and thistles shall it produce for you,

So that you will have to eat wild plants.

By the sweat of your brow shall you earn your living,

Until you return to the ground,

Since it was from it that you were taken;

For dust you are,

And to dust you must return.”

The man called his wife’s name Eve [mother], because she
was the mother of all living beings.

The Lord God made skin tunics for the man and his wife,
and clothed them.

Then the Lord God said,

“See, the man has become like one of us, in knowing good
from evil; and now, suppose he were to reach out his hand and
take the fruit of the tree of life also, and eating it, live for-
ever!”

So the Lord God expelled him from the garden of Eden, to
till the ground from which he had been taken; he drove the
man out, and stationed the cherubim east of the garden of Eden,
with the flaming, whirling sword to guard the way to the tree
of life.



THE FLOOD

Many ancient peoples believed in a flood that had once covered the earth. The Hebrews shared this belief and told how God warned Noah to prepare for it by building a boat to live in and taking with him in it all kinds of animals, to save them from the flood. But the Hebrews saw in it a great moral lesson: the terrible fate of those who do wrong and God's care for those who do right. They believed the Flood would never return and thought of the rainbow as God's pledge that it would not.

WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT the wickedness of man on the earth was great, and that the whole bent of his thinking was never anything but evil, the Lord regretted that he had ever made man on the earth, and he was grieved to the heart. So the Lord said,

“I will blot the men that I have created off the face of the ground, both men and animals, reptiles, and birds of the air; for I regret that I ever made them.”

THE FLOOD

Noah, however, had found favor with the Lord.

The following are the descendants of Noah. Noah alone among his contemporaries was a pious and exceedingly good man; Noah walked with God. Noah had three sons born to him, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Now in God's sight, the earth was corrupt; the earth was full of wrong-doing; God saw that the earth was corrupt; for every mortal on the earth had corrupted his life. So God said to Noah,

"I have resolved on the extermination of all mortals; for the earth is full of wrong-doing through them; I am going to exterminate them from the earth. Make yourself an ark of oleander wood; make the ark with cabins, and smear it with bitumen inside and out. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark is to be three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits; you are to make a roof for the ark, finishing it off on top to the width of a cubit; and the doorway of the ark you are to put in its side; you are to make it with lower, second, and third decks. I on my part am about to bring a flood upon the earth, to destroy every mortal from under the heavens, who has the breath of life in him; everything that is on the earth shall perish. But with you I will make a covenant; you shall enter the ark, accompanied by your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives. Also, of all living creatures, of all animals, you must have two of every kind enter the ark, to keep them alive with you; they are to be a male and a female. Of the various kinds of birds, the various kinds of animals, and all the various kinds of reptiles, two of every kind are to join you, that you may keep them alive. Take also some of every kind of edible food, and store it by you, to be food for yourself and them."

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Noah did so; he did just as God had commanded him.

The Lord said to Noah,

“Enter the ark, with all your household; for you alone of the present age have I found righteous. Of all clean animals, you are to take seven pairs, a male with its mate; but of the animals that are not clean a pair, a male with its mate; likewise, of the birds of the air seven pairs, a male and a female—to keep their kind alive all over the earth. For in seven days’ time I am going to make it rain for forty days and nights on the earth, to blot off the face of the earth every living thing that I have made.”

Noah did just as God had commanded him.

* * * * *

In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month, on that very day the fountains of the great abyss were all broken open, and the windows of the heavens were opened. (The rain fell on the earth for forty days and nights.) That same day Noah, with Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah’s sons, and Noah’s wife, and the three wives of his sons accompanying them, went into the ark, together with all the various kinds of wild beasts, all the various kinds of domestic animals, all the various kinds of land reptiles, and all the various kinds of birds, everything with feathers and wings; of all creatures in which there was the breath of life, a pair of each joined Noah in the ark. Those that entered were a male and a female of every kind of animal, as God had commanded him. Then the Lord shut him in.

The flood continued for forty days upon the earth. The waters mounted, and lifted the ark so that it rose above the

THE FLOOD

earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, so that the ark floated on the surface of the waters. The waters rose higher and higher on the earth, until the highest mountains everywhere under the heavens were all covered. Fifteen cubits above them the waters rose, so that the mountains were covered. Every creature that moved on the earth perished, including birds, domestic animals, wild beasts, all the land reptiles, and all mankind. Of all that was on the land, everything in whose nostrils was the breath of life died; every living thing was blotted off the face of the earth, both men and animals and reptiles and birds; they were blotted off the earth, so that Noah alone was left, and those that were with him in the ark. The waters rose on the earth for one hundred and fifty days.

Then God remembered Noah, and all the wild and domestic animals that were with him in the ark; so God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. Likewise, the fountains of the abyss and the windows of the heavens were closed. The rain from the heavens ceased, and the waters abated steadily from the earth. At the end of one hundred and fifty days the waters subsided, so that on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark grounded on the mountains of Ararat. The waters subsided steadily until the tenth month; and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

At the end of forty days Noah opened the window that he had made in the ark, and released a raven, which went flying back and forth until the waters had dried off the earth. Then he released a dove, to see whether the waters had subsided from the surface of the land; but the dove could find no resting-place for the sole of her foot, so she came back to him into the

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ark; for there was water all over the earth. He put out his hand, and catching her, drew her into the ark with him. After waiting another seven days, he again released the dove from the ark; in the evening the dove came back to him, and there, in her beak, was a freshly picked olive leaf! So Noah knew that the waters had subsided off the earth. After waiting another seven days, he released the dove, but she never came back to him. By the first day of the first month of the six hundred and first year of Noah's life the waters had dried off the earth. So Noah removed the covering of the ark and found that the surface of the ground was quite dry. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was dry.

Then God said to Noah,

"Come out of the ark, your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives accompanying you; bring out with you every animal of every sort that is with you, birds, quadrupeds, and all land reptiles, that they may breed freely on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."

So Noah came out, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives accompanying him. Every animal, every reptile, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth came out of the ark by their species.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and taking some clean animals and birds of every kind, he offered them as burnt-offerings on the altar. When the Lord smelled the soothing odor, the Lord said to himself,

"I will never again curse the soil because of man, though the bent of man's mind may be evil from his very youth; nor will I ever again destroy all life, as I have just done. As long

THE FLOOD

as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall never cease.”

* * * * *

God then said to Noah and to his sons with him,

“As for me, I do hereby establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and all the wild beasts with you, as many of them as came out of the ark; I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be destroyed by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to ravage the earth.”

Further, God said,

“This shall be the symbol of the covenant which I am making between myself and you and every living creature that is with you, to endless generations: I put my rainbow in the clouds, and it shall be a symbol of the covenant between myself and the world. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, and then I will remember my covenant, which obtains between myself and you and every living creature of every sort, and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it, and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of every sort that is on the earth.”



THE TOWER OF BABEL

When the Hebrews were carried away into Babylonia as captives, they saw for the first time the towering Babylonian temples, much higher than any buildings they had ever seen. These great idol temples made them think of the uselessness of such efforts—as though man could climb up into the sky to God! In Babylonia they found themselves among people whose language they could not understand and they explained the confusing variety of human languages as God's punishment for these wicked attempts to reach him. The prophets had taught them that the true way to reach God was through the heart and the inner life and that he cared more for truthfulness and goodness than he did for huge temple buildings.

NOW THE WHOLE EARTH USED ONLY one language, with few words. On the occasion of a migration from the east, men discovered a plain in the land of Shinar, and settled there. Then they said to one another,

THE TOWER OF BABEL

“Come, let us make bricks, burning them well.”

So they used bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said,

“Come, let us build ourselves a city with a tower whose top shall reach the heavens (thus making a name for ourselves), so that we may not be scattered all over the earth.”

Then the Lord came down to look at the city and tower which human beings had built. The Lord said,

“They are just one people, and they all have the same language. If this is what they can do as a beginning, then nothing that they resolve to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there make such a babble of their language that they will not understand one another’s speech.”

Thus the Lord dispersed them from there all over the earth, so that they had to stop building the city. That was why its name was called Babel, because it was there that the Lord made a babble of the language of the whole earth, and it was from there that the Lord dispersed them all over the earth.



THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

Abraham was a tribal chieftain who lived on the borders of Mesopotamia. He moved westward with his tribe and his cattle into the land of Canaan, which he came to believe would be the future home of his descendants. As he wandered about seeking pasture for his flocks, he came near the city of Sodom, which was at the southern end of the Dead Sea. Abraham thought of God as just, but also merciful, even to the heathen inhabitants of that wicked city.

Abraham, who was first called Abram, was a Hebrew, and the descendants of his grandson Jacob were called Hebrews after him.

THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM,

“Leave your land, your relatives, and your father’s home, for the land that I will show you; and I will make a great nation of you; I will bless you, and make your name so

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great that it will be used for blessings. I will bless those who bless you, and anyone who curses you I will curse; through you shall all the families of the earth invoke blessings on one another."

So Abram departed, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot, with all the property that they had accumulated, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran, and they started out for the land of Canaan; and to the land of Canaan they came.

Abram traveled through the land as far as the sanctuary of Shechem at the terebinth of Moreh, the Canaanites being then in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said,

"To your descendants I am going to give this land."

So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hills east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. Then Abram set out, continuing on his way to the Negeb.

* * * * *

Then the Lord thought,

"Shall I hide what I am about to do from Abraham, seeing that Abraham is bound to become a great and powerful nation, and through him all the nations of the earth will invoke blessings on one another? No, I will make it known to him, in order that he may give instructions to his sons and his family after him to keep to the way of the Lord by doing what is good and right, so that the Lord may fulfil for Abraham what he promised him."

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So the Lord said,

“Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin very grave, I must go down and see whether or not their conduct entirely answers to the outcry against them that has reached me; I would know.”

So the men departed from there, and went off to Sodom, while the Lord remained standing before Abraham. Abraham then went up to him, and said,

“Wilt thou really sweep away good along with bad? Suppose there are fifty good men in the city, wilt thou really sweep it away, and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty good men that are in it? Far be it from thee to do such a thing as this, to make the good perish with the bad, so that good and bad fare alike! Far be it from thee! Shall not the judge of the whole earth himself act justly?”

So the Lord said,

“If I find in Sodom fifty good men, within the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

Abraham rejoined,

“Here I am venturing to speak to the Lord, and I mere dust and ashes! Suppose there are five short of the fifty good men; wouldst thou destroy the whole city by reason of the five?”

“I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there,” he replied.

Once more he said to him,

“Suppose only forty are to be found there?”

“I will not do it for the sake of the forty,” he replied.

Then he said,

“Pray, let not my Lord be angry if I should say: suppose only thirty are to be found there?”

“I will not do it, if I find thirty there,” he said.

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

“Here I am venturing to speak to the Lord; suppose only twenty are to be found there?” he said.

“I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty,” he said.

Then he said,

“Pray, let not my Lord be angry if I should speak just once more; suppose only ten are to be found there?”

“I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten,” he said.

As soon as he finished speaking to Abraham, the Lord went away, while Abraham returned home.



THE STORY OF JACOB

Abraham's grandson Jacob so wronged his brother Esau that he had to leave his home and take refuge with his uncle Laban. It was a long journey; and one night on the way, at a place called Bethel, Jacob had a dream. God seemed to speak to him, filling him with hope and courage. A little later, at a well where shepherds watered their flocks, he met his cousin Rachel. Theirs is one of the oldest love stories in the world.

LEAVING BEERSHEBA, JACOB SET OUT for Haran. Reaching a certain sanctuary, he spent the night there; for the sun had set. He took one of the stones of the sanctuary, and using it for a pillow, he lay down in that sanctuary. He had a dream in which he saw a ladder set up on the earth, with its top reaching the sky, and angels of God were ascending and descending on it. Then the Lord stood over him, and said,

“I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and of

THE STORY OF JACOB

Isaac. The land on which you are lying, I am going to give to you and your descendants. Your descendants shall be like the dust on the ground; you shall spread to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south, so that all races of the earth will invoke blessings on one another through you and your descendants. I will be with you, and guard you wherever you go, and bring you back to this land; for I will never forsake you, until I have done what I have promised you."

When Jacob woke from his sleep, he said,

"The Lord must surely be in this place—and I did not know it!"

He was awe-struck, and said,

"What an awesome place this is! This can be nothing other than the house of God, and that the gate of the sky."

Accordingly, he called the name of that sanctuary Bethel [house of God], whereas the earlier name of the city had been Luz.

So when Jacob rose in the morning, he took the stone which he had used as a pillow, and setting it up as a sacred pillar, he poured oil on its top. Jacob then made this vow:

"If God will go with me, and watch over me on this journey that I am making, and give me food to eat and clothes to wear, so that I come home safely to my father's house, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone which I have set up as a sacred pillar shall be God's house, and I will give to thee a portion of everything that thou givest me."

Jacob then continued his journey, and came to the land of the Kedemites. Looking around, he saw a well in the open, with three flocks of sheep lying beside it; for it was from this well that the flocks were watered, but the stone over the mouth of

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the well was so large that it was only after all the shepherds had collected there that they could roll the stone off the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, after which they would replace the stone over the mouth of the well.

“My friends, where do you come from?” Jacob said to them.

“We come from Haran,” they said.

“Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor?” he said to them.

“We do,” said they.

“Is he well?” he said to them.

“He is,” they said, “and here is his daughter Rachel coming with his sheep!”

“Why,” said he, “the day has still long to run! It is not yet time for the live stock to be gathered in; water the sheep, and go on pasturing them.”

But they said,

“We cannot until all the shepherds assemble, and roll the stone off the mouth of the well so that we can water the sheep.”

While he was still talking with them, Rachel arrived with her father’s flock; for she was a shepherdess. As soon as Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother’s brother, with the flock of Laban, his mother’s brother, Jacob went up, and rolling the stone off the mouth of the well, watered the flock of Laban, his mother’s brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice in weeping.

When Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and the son of Rebekah, she ran and told her father. As soon as Laban heard about Jacob, his sister’s son, he ran to meet him, embraced him, kissed him, and brought him home. Jacob then told Laban his whole story, whereupon Laban said to him,

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“You are my very own flesh and blood!”

So he stayed with him for a whole month.

Then Laban said to Jacob,

“Should you, just because you are a relative of mine, work for me for nothing? Let me know what your wages should be.”

Now Laban had two daughters, the name of the older being Leah, and that of the younger Rachel; Leah had weak eyes, while Rachel was beautiful and lovely. Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel, so he said,

“I will work seven years for you in return for Rachel, your younger daughter.”

Whereupon Laban said,

“It is better for me to give her to you than to anyone else; stay with me.”

So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, because he loved her.

* * * * *

On his journey from Paddan-aram, God again appeared to Jacob, and blessed him. God said to him,

“Your name has been Jacob; you shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel is to be your name.”

So he came to be named Israel.

Further, God said to him,

“I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; a nation, or rather a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring from you. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you, and to your descendants after you I will give it.”

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God then left him at the place where he spoke with him, whereupon Jacob erected a sacred pillar at the place where he spoke with him, a pillar of stone, poured a libation on it, and anointed it with oil. So Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him Bethel.



THE STORY OF JOSEPH

The best loved of all the sons of Jacob was Joseph. His jealous brothers hated him and thought they were rid of him when they sold him as a slave to a wandering tribe of strangers. How he escaped from his troubles and made his own way to success and power forms one of the most dramatic stories in the world.

AT THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN JOSEPH used to accompany his brothers in looking after the flocks, being a mere lad alongside the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he was the son of his old age; so he made a long cloak for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his brothers, they hated him, and could not say a good word about him.

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Joseph had a dream, which he told to his brothers, so that they hated him all the more. He said to them,

“Listen to this dream that I have had. While we were binding sheaves in the field, my sheaf rose up and remained standing, while your sheaves gathered round it, and made obeisance to my sheaf!”

His brothers said to him,

“Are you indeed to be king over us; would you actually rule us?”

So they hated him all the more for his dreams and for his words.

Then he had another dream which he recounted to his brothers.

“I have just had another dream,” he said, “and the sun, moon, and eleven stars made obeisance to me!”

When he recounted it to his father and his brothers, his father reproved him, saying to him,

“What is this dream that you have had? Am I actually to come with your mother and your brothers, and make obeisance to the earth to you?”

But while his brothers became jealous of him, his father kept the matter in mind.

After his brothers had gone off to pasture their father’s flocks at Shechem, Israel said to Joseph,

“Are not your brothers pasturing the flocks at Shechem? Come, let me send you to them.”

“I am ready,” he replied.

So he said to him,

“Go and see how your brothers are, and the flocks; and bring me back word.”

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So he dispatched him from the valley of Hebron; and he arrived at Shechem. But a man found him wandering about the country; so the man asked him,

“What are you looking for?”

“I am looking for my brothers,” he said; “do tell me where they are pasturing the flocks.”

The man said,

“They have moved from here; for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’ ”

So Joseph followed his brothers, and found them at Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he could reach them, they plotted against him to kill him.

“There comes the dreamer yonder!” they said to one another. “Come now, let us kill him, and throw him into one of the pits. We can say that a wild beast devoured him. Then we shall see what his dreams will come to.”

But when Reuben heard this, he tried to save him from their hands; so he said,

“Let us not take his life.

“Do not shed any blood,” Reuben said to them; “throw him into the pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him” (his idea being to save him from their hands, and restore him to his father).

As soon as Joseph reached his brothers, they stripped him of his cloak (the long cloak that he was wearing), and seizing him, they threw him into the pit. The pit, however, was empty, with no water in it.

Then they sat down to eat a meal; but raising their eyes, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and laudanum, which they were

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engaged in taking down to Egypt. Thereupon Judah said to his brothers,

“What is the good of killing our brother and covering up his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay hands on him; for after all he is our brother, our own flesh.”

His brothers agreed. Some Midianite traders passed by, so pulling Joseph up, they lifted him out of the pit. They sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver; and they took him to Egypt.

So when Reuben went back to the pit, there was no Joseph in the pit. Then he tore his clothes, and returning to his brothers, said,

“The boy is gone! And I, how can I go home?”

Then they took Joseph’s cloak, and killing a goat, they dipped the cloak in the blood. So they soiled the long cloak, and then they brought it to their father, saying,

“We found this; see whether it is your son’s cloak or not.”

Examining it, he said,

“It is my son’s cloak! Some wild beast has devoured him; Joseph must be torn to pieces.”

Then Jacob tore his clothes, and girded himself with sack-cloth, and mourned for his son for a long time. His sons and daughters all tried to console him, but he would not be consoled.

“No,” he said, “I will go down mourning to my son to Sheol.”

Thus did his father weep for him.

* * * * *

When Joseph was taken down to Egypt, Potiphar, an Egyptian, an officer of Pharaoh, his head steward, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The Lord was

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with Joseph, so that he became a prosperous man. He lived in the house of his master, the Egyptian; and his master noticed that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made everything prosper with him that he undertook; so Joseph found favor with him, and was made his personal attendant; then he made him superintendent of his household, and put him in charge of all his property. From the time that he made him superintendent of his household and all his property, the Lord blessed the house of the Egyptian for Joseph's sake, the Lord's blessing resting on everything that belonged to him, both indoors and outdoors. So he left everything that he had to Joseph's charge, and having him, gave no concern to anything, except the food that he ate.

Joseph was so handsome that his master's wife took a fancy to him, and when he refused her advances, she told her husband that he had attacked her.

When Joseph's master heard the statements of his wife who said to him, "This is the way your slave treated me," his anger blazed, and Joseph's master took him and threw him into the prison where state prisoners were confined. So he lay there in prison.

The Lord, however, was with Joseph and was kind to him, and got him into the good graces of the jailer, so that the jailer put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the jail, and he looked after everything that was done there. The jailer exercised no oversight over anything in his charge, because the Lord was with him, and the Lord made whatever he undertook prosper.

Some time after these events the butler and the baker of the

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king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt, so that Pharaoh became angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker, and put them in custody in the head steward's house, in the prison where Joseph was confined. The head steward intrusted Joseph with them, and he waited on them. After they had been in custody some time, they both had dreams on the same night, each having a dream of different meaning—the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt who were confined in the prison. When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were worried, so he asked Pharaoh's officers who were in custody with him in his master's house,

“Why do you look so gloomy today?”

“We have had dreams,” they replied, “and there is no one to interpret them.”

Joseph said to them,

“Does not dream interpretation belong to God? Pray recount them to me.”

So the chief butler recounted his dream to Joseph.

“In my dream,” he said to him, “there was a vine in front of me, and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot up, its clusters ripened into grapes. With Pharaoh's cup in my hand, I took the grapes, and squeezing them into Pharaoh's cup, I placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.”

Joseph said to him,

“This is its interpretation: the three branches represent three days; within three days Pharaoh shall summon you, and restore you to your position, so that you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as you used to do when you were his butler; so, if you will be good enough to keep me in mind when prosperity comes to you, do me the kindness of mentioning me to Pharaoh, and

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so liberate me from this house; for I was really kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and further, I have done nothing here that I should be put into a dungeon."

When the chief baker found that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph,

"I too had a dream; in mine there were three open-work baskets on my head, and in the top basket was some of every kind of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head."

Joseph answered,

"This is its interpretation: the three baskets represent three days; within three days Pharaoh shall summon you, and hang you on a tree, and the birds shall eat the flesh off you."

On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he held a feast for all his officials; and among his officials he summoned the chief butler and the chief baker. The chief butler he restored to his duties, so that he again placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand; but the chief baker he hanged, as Joseph had told them in his interpretation. The chief butler, however, did not keep Joseph in mind, but forgot him.

Two whole years later Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing beside the Nile, when seven beautiful, fat cows came up out of the Nile, and browsed in the sedge. After them seven other cows came up out of the Nile, ugly and thin, and stood beside the other cows on the bank of the Nile. Then the thin, ugly cows ate up the seven beautiful, fat cows, whereupon Pharaoh awoke. When he fell asleep again, he had a second dream: there were seven ears of grain growing on a single stalk, fine and plump, and after them there sprouted seven other ears, thin and blasted by the east wind. Then the thin

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ears swallowed up the seven fine, full ears, whereupon Pharaoh awoke, only to find it a dream!

Next morning he was so perturbed that he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. To them Pharaoh recounted his dreams, but no one could interpret them for Pharaoh. Then the chief butler said to Pharaoh,

“I would today recall my offense, how Pharaoh became angry with his servants, and put them in custody in the house of the head steward, myself and the chief baker. On the same night we had dreams, he and I, each of us having a dream of different meaning. With us there was a Hebrew youth, a slave belonging to the head steward, and when we recounted our dreams to him, he interpreted them for us, giving each the proper interpretation of his dream. And it fell out just as he had indicated in the interpretation; I was restored to my position, while the other was hanged.”

Thereupon Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was brought hurriedly from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came into Pharaoh’s presence.

“I have had a dream,” Pharaoh said to Joseph, “but there is no one to interpret it. However, I have heard it said of you that you know how to interpret dreams.”

“Apart from God can Pharaoh be given a favorable response?” Joseph answered Pharaoh.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph,

“I dreamed that I was standing on the bank of the Nile, when seven fat and beautiful cows came up out of the Nile, and browsed in the sedge. After them came up seven other cows, thin and very ugly and lean—I have never seen such poor cows in all the land of Egypt. Then the lean, ugly cows

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ate up the first seven fat cows; they passed right into them, but no one would have known that they had done so—they looked just as bad as before. Then I awoke.

“In another dream I saw seven ears of grain growing on a single stalk, full and plump, and after them there sprouted seven other ears, withered, thin, and blasted by the east wind. Then the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump ears. I told this to the magicians, but there was no one to explain it to me.”

Joseph said to Pharaoh,

“Pharaoh’s dream is simple; God would reveal to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven fat cows represent seven years, and the seven plump ears represent seven years—it is a single dream. The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them represent seven years, and so do the seven empty ears blasted by the east wind; there are to be seven years of famine. It is as I told Pharaoh, God would show Pharaoh what he is about to do. Seven years of great plenty are coming throughout all the land of Egypt, but following them there will be seven years of famine, so that the plenty will all be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will devastate the land, and the plenty will become quite unknown in the land because of that famine which is to follow; for it will be very severe. The fact that the dream was sent twice to Pharaoh in two forms means that the matter is absolutely settled by God, and that God will soon bring it about. Now, then, let Pharaoh find a shrewd and prudent man, and put him in control of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint officials over the land to forearm the land of Egypt during the seven years of plenty; let them collect all the food of these good years that are coming, and under the authority of Pharaoh store up grain for food in the cities, and

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hold it there. The food shall serve as a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to befall the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish from the famine."

The proposal commended itself to Pharaoh and all his courtiers, and Pharaoh said to his courtiers,

"Can we find a man with the spirit of God in him like this one?"

So Pharaoh said to Joseph,

"Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so shrewd and prudent as you; you shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people shall be obedient to your commands; it is only in the matter of the throne itself that I shall be your superior."

Thereupon Pharaoh said to Joseph,

"I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt."

And taking the signet ring from his finger, Pharaoh put it on Joseph's finger; he dressed him in linen robes, put a gold chain round his neck, and had him ride in the second of his chariots, with people shouting "Bow down!" before him, thus putting him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

"Although I continue as Pharaoh," said Pharaoh to Joseph, "yet without your consent shall no one stir hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

Then Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah, and married him to Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On; and Joseph's fame spread throughout the land of Egypt.

Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

After leaving the presence of Pharaoh, Joseph made a tour

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through the whole land of Egypt. During the seven years of plenty the land produced abundant crops; so he collected all the food of the seven years when there was plenty in the land of Egypt, and thus stored food in the cities, storing in each city the food from the fields around it. Joseph stored up grain like the sands of the sea, in great quantities, until he ceased to keep account of it; for it was past measuring.

Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh [forgetfulness]; "For," said he, "God has made me forget all about my hardships and my father's home." The name of the second he called Ephraim [fruitfulness]; "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my misfortune."

When the seven years of plenty that had prevailed in the land of Egypt came to an end, the seven years of famine set in, as Joseph had said.

There was famine in all lands, but throughout all the land of Egypt there was food.

When all the land of Egypt became famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for food; so Pharaoh announced to all Egypt,

"Go to Joseph, and do what he tells you."

The famine spread all over the land, so Joseph threw open all that he had locked up, and sold grain to the Egyptians, since the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. People from all lands came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain; for the famine was severe all over the earth.

When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons,

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“Why do you stare at one another? I have just heard,” he said, “that there is grain in Egypt; go down there, and buy some for us there, that we may live and not die.”

So ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt, since Jacob would not let Joseph’s brother Benjamin go with his other brothers; “Lest,” thought he, “harm should befall him.” Thus the Israelites came with the rest to buy grain; for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

Now Joseph was the vizier of the land; it was he who sold the grain to all the people of the land. So Joseph’s brothers came and prostrated themselves before him, with their faces to the ground. When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he treated them as if he were a stranger, and spoke harshly to them.

“Where have you come from?” he said to them.

“From the land of Canaan to buy food,” they said.

Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. Remembering the dreams that he had had about them, Joseph said to them,

“You are spies; you have come to find out the condition of the land!”

“No, my lord,” they said to him, “your servants have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man; we are honest men; your servants are not spies.”

“Not so,” he said to them; “but you have come to find out the condition of the land.”

But they said,

“Your servants are brothers, twelve in all; we are sons of a certain man in the land of Canaan; the youngest is at present with our father, while the other is no more.”

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But Joseph said to them,

“It is as I told you; you are spies. By this you shall be put to the proof: as Pharaoh lives, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of your number to fetch your brother, while the rest of you remain in custody. Thus shall your statements be put to the proof as to whether you are truthful or not. As Pharaoh lives, you are spies!”

So he bundled them off to prison for three days, but on the third day Joseph said to them,

“Since I am one who fears God, you may save your lives, if you do this: if you are honest men, let one of you brothers remain confined in your prison and then the rest of you, go and take grain home to your starving households; but you must bring me your youngest brother. Thus shall your words be verified, and you shall not die.”

They proceeded to do so, saying to one another,

“Unfortunately, we were to blame about our brother, upon whose distress, when he pleaded with us for mercy, we gazed unmoved; that is why this distress has come to us.”

Then Reuben spoke up and said to them,

“Did I not say to you, ‘Do not sin against the lad’? But you paid no attention; so now comes a reckoning for his blood!”

They did not know that Joseph heard them; for the interpreter was between them. He turned from them, and wept. On coming back to them, he spoke to them, took Simeon from them, and imprisoned him in their presence. Joseph then ordered their receptacles to be filled with grain, the money of each of them to be replaced in his sack, and provisions to be

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given them for the journey. This was done for them. Then they loaded their asses with their grain, and departed.

At the camping-place for the night one of them opened his sack to give his ass some fodder, and there he saw his money in the mouth of his sack!

“My money has been put back! It is right here inside my sack!” he said to his brothers.

Thereupon their hearts sank, and they turned to one another in fear, saying,

“What is this that God has done to us?”

On reaching their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had befallen them:

“The man, the lord of the land, talked harshly to us, making us out to be spies of the land. But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we are not spies. We are brothers on our father’s side, twelve in all; one is no more, and the youngest is at present with our father in the land of Canaan.’ Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall find out whether you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and taking something for your famishing households, be off; and then bring me your youngest brother. Thus shall I know that you are not spies, but honest men. I will restore your brother to you, and you will be free to trade in the land.’ ”

When they came to empty their sacks, there was the money-packet of each in his sack! On seeing their money-packets, both they and their father were dismayed, and their father Jacob said to them,

“It is I that you bereave. Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin! It is on me that all this falls.”

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Reuben said to his father,

“You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him home to you! Put him in my charge, and I will bring him back to you.”

But he said,

“My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm were to befall him on the journey that you make, you would bring my gray hairs down to Sheol in sorrow.”

The famine continued severe in the land, so when they had finished eating all the grain which they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them,

“Go again, and buy us a little food.”

But Judah said to him,

“The man strictly warned us: ‘You cannot have audience with me unless your brother is with you.’ If you are ready to let our brother go with us, we will go down and buy food for you; but if you are not ready to let him go, we cannot go down; for the man said to us, ‘You cannot have audience with me unless your brother is with you.’”

“Why did you bring this trouble on me,” said Israel, “by telling the man that you had another brother?”

They said,

“The man persisted in asking about ourselves and our family —‘Is your father still living? Have you another brother?’ We only gave him the information demanded by these questions of his. How could we possibly know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”

“Let the lad go with me,” said Judah to his father Israel; “but we must go at once, if we would save our lives and not die, both we, you, and our dependents. I will be surety for him;

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you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, you may blame me for it all my life; in fact if we had not wasted so much time, we could have made a second trip by now."

Then their father Israel said to them,

"If it must be so, then do this: take some of the country's best in your receptacles, and take it down to the man as a present—a little balm, a little honey, gum, laudanum, pistachio nuts, and almonds. Also take double the money with you, and so take back with you the money that was replaced in the mouths of your sacks—perhaps there was a mistake. Take your brother too, and go, return to the man. May God Almighty grant you such kindness with the man that he will release your other brother for you, as well as Benjamin. As for me, as I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

So the men took this present, and taking double the money with them, as well as Benjamin, they started off, went down to Egypt, and stood in the presence of Joseph. When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his house-steward,

"Take the men home, kill an animal, and get it ready; for the men are to dine with me at noon."

The man did as Joseph said, and brought the men to Joseph's house. On being brought to Joseph's house, the men became frightened, saying,

"It is because of the money which reappeared in our sacks the first time that we are being brought in, so that he may devise some pretext against us, and falling upon us, take us into slavery, together with our asses."

So they went up to Joseph's house-steward, and spoke to him at the doorway of the house.

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“If you please, sir,” they said, “we came down the first time specially to buy food, but when we reached the camping-place for the night, and opened our sacks, there was each man’s money in the mouth of his sack—our money in full. Accordingly we have brought it back with us, and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.”

“Be at ease,” he said, “do not be afraid! It must have been your God, the God of your fathers, who put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money.”

Then he brought Simeon out to them.

After bringing the men into Joseph’s house, the man gave them water to wash their feet, and he gave them fodder for their asses. Then they set out the present in anticipation of Joseph’s arrival at noon; for they had heard that they were to dine there. When Joseph came home, they brought him the present that they had carried into the house, and bowed to the ground before him. He asked after their health.

“Is your father well,” he said, “the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still living?”

“Your servant, our father, is well; he is still living,” they said, bowing in homage to him.

Raising his eyes, he saw his brother Benjamin, the son of his own mother, and said,

“Is this your youngest brother, of whom you told me?

“May God be gracious to you, my son!” he said.

Thereupon Joseph hastily sought a place to weep; for his heart was deeply stirred at sight of his brother; he retired to his room, and wept there. Then he bathed his face, and came out, and controlling himself, said,

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“Serve the meal.”

The meal was served, separately for him, for them, and for the Egyptians that were dining with him; for the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, because that would be abhorrent to the Egyptians. They were seated in his presence in order of age, from the oldest to the youngest, so that the men stared at one another in amazement. Portions were carried from his own table to them, but Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as any other’s. So they feasted, and drank with him.

He then gave orders to his house-steward,

“Fill the men’s sacks as full as they will hold with food, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack; in the mouth of the sack belonging to the youngest put my cup, the silver cup, along with his money for the grain.”

He followed the instructions which Joseph gave.

With the dawn of morning the men with their asses were sent on their way. Although they had left the city, they had not gone far, when Joseph said to his house-steward,

“Run at once after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you stolen my silver cup? Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, which in fact he uses for divination? It is a wicked thing that you have done.’”

So he overtook them, and addressed these words to them; but they said to him,

“Why should my lord speak like this? Your servants would never think of doing such a thing! Why, we even brought you back from the land of Canaan the money that we found in the mouths of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your master’s house? That one of your servants in whose

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possession it is found shall die, and the rest of us will become slaves to my lord."

"Although it may indeed be just as you say," he said, "yet the one in whose possession it is found shall become my slave, but the rest of you shall be held blameless."

Then each of them quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and opened it, and search being made, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Thereupon they tore their clothes, and each having re-loaded his ass, they returned to the city.

Judah and his brothers arrived at the house of Joseph, while he was still there, so they flung themselves on the ground before him.

"What is this that you have done?" Joseph said to them. "Did you not know that a man like me would be sure to use divination?"

Judah said,

"What can we say to my lord? What can we urge? How can we prove our innocence? God has discovered the crime of your servants; here we are, the slaves of my lord, both we and he in whose possession the cup has been found."

"I could not think of doing such a thing," he said; "only the man in whose possession the cup has been found shall be my slave; the rest of you are free to go back to your father."

Then Judah went up to him, and said,

"If you please, my lord, let your servant speak a word in the ear of my lord, and your anger not blaze against your servant; for you are the equal of Pharaoh himself. My lord asked his servants, 'Have you a father or a brother?' And we said to my lord, 'We have an aged father, and a young brother,

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the child of his old age; his brother is dead. so that he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me that I may see him.' But we told my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father; his father would die if he were to leave him.' Whereupon you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you cannot have audience with me again.'

"When we went back to your servant, my father, we reported to him the words of my lord. Then our father said, 'Go again and buy a little food for us.' But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother accompanies us, we can go down; for we shall not be allowed to have audience with the man unless our youngest brother is with us.' Then your servant, my father, said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me only two children; then one of them left me, and I think he must surely have been torn to pieces; for I have never seen him since. If then you take this one from me too, and harm befall him, you will bring down my gray hairs to Sheol in trouble.'

"And now, when I rejoin your servant, my father, and the boy not with us, his life is so bound up with the boy's that he will die when he sees that there is no boy, and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant, our father, to Sheol in sorrow; for your servant went surety for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, let my father blame me for it all my life.' Now then, pray let your servant remain in the boy's place as my lord's slave, but let the boy go back with his brothers; for how can I go back to my father unless the boy is with me, and witness the agony that would come to my father?"

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Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, so he cried out,

“Have everyone withdraw from me.”

So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers; but he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and Pharaoh’s household heard it. Joseph said to his brothers,

“I am Joseph. Is my father still living?”

But his brothers could not answer him, because they were so dismayed at being in his presence. So Joseph said to his brothers,

“Come nearer to me.”

When they came nearer, he said,

“I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt. Now do not be distressed nor angry with yourselves that you sold me here; for it was to save life that God sent me ahead of you; for it is two years now that the famine has prevailed in the land, but there are still five years in which there will be no plowing or reaping. God sent me ahead of you to insure you a remnant in the earth, and to be the means of a remarkable escape for you. So then it was not you, but God who sent me here, and made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘Thus speaks your son Joseph: “Since God has made me lord of all Egypt, come down to me without delay. You shall live in the land of Goshen, and be near me, you, your sons, your grandsons, your flocks, your herds, and all that belong to you; and there I will provide for you, lest you, your household, and all that belong to you come to want; for there

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are still five years of famine to come.”’ You can see for yourselves and my brother Benjamin for himself that it is I who speak to you. You must tell my father all about my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen; hurry and bring my father here.”

Then he fell on the neck of his brother Benjamin and wept, while Benjamin wept on his neck. He kissed all his brothers, and wept on their shoulders, after which his brothers talked with him.

When the news was received at Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had arrived, Pharaoh was delighted, as were also his courtiers. Pharaoh said to Joseph,

“Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your animals, go back to the land of Canaan, and taking your father and your households, come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, so that you shall eat the fat of the land. Also, carry out this order: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; convey your father in them, and come back. Never mind your goods; for the best of the whole land of Egypt will be yours.’”

The sons of Israel did so. Joseph gave them wagons in accord with the command of Pharaoh, and he also gave them provisions for the journey. To each of them he gave a festal garment, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five festal garments. To his father he sent likewise ten asses loaded with the best products of Egypt, and ten she-asses loaded with grain, bread, and provisions for his father on the journey. Then he sent his brothers away; and as they left, he said to them,

“Do not get too excited on the way.”

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So they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan, to their father Jacob.

“Joseph is still living, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt,” they told him.

But he was so stunned that he would not believe them. However, when they told him all that Joseph had said to them, and he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to convey him, their father Jacob recovered.

“Enough!” said Israel; “my son Joseph is still living; I will go and see him before I die.”



THE STORY OF MOSES

After Joseph's death the Israelites remained in Egypt and in time became little better than slaves of the Pharaoh, or king, of Egypt. Then there rose out of their own number a great leader and deliverer named Moses. When he was a baby he was found in the Nile by an Egyptian princess who saved him and brought him up. His call to his work came to him at the sight of a burning bush in the desert. After many disappointments, he led his people out of Egypt and through the desert to the borders of the Promised Land.

THEN A NEW KING ROSE OVER EGYPT, who had no knowledge of Joseph; he said to his people,

“See, the Israelite people have become too numerous and too strong for us; come, let us take precautions against them lest they become so numerous that in the case of a war they

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should join forces with our enemies and fight against us, and so escape from the land."

Accordingly, gang-foremen were put in charge of them, to oppress them with their heavy labor; and they built Pithom and Raamses as store-cities for Pharaoh. But the more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and expanded, so that they became apprehensive about the Israelites.

The Egyptians reduced the Israelites to rigorous slavery; they made life bitter for them in hard work with mortar and bricks, and in all kinds of work in the fields, all the work that they exacted of them being rigorous.

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Pharaoh commanded all his people,

"Every boy that is born to the Hebrews, you must throw into the Nile, but you are to let all the girls live."

Now a man belonging to the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. The woman conceived and bore a son, and seeing that he was robust, she hid him for three months. When she could no longer hide him, she procured an ark of papyrus reeds for him, and daubing it with bitumen and pitch, she put the child in it, and placed it among the reeds beside the bank of the Nile. His sister posted herself some distance away to see what would happen to him.

Presently Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at the Nile, while her maids walked on the bank of the Nile. Then she saw the ark among the reeds and sent her maid to get it. On opening it, she saw the child, and it was a boy crying! She took pity on him, and said,

"This is one of the Hebrews' children."

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Thereupon his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter,

"Shall I go and summon a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, to nurse the child for you?"

"Go," said Pharaoh's daughter to her.

So the girl went and called the child's mother, to whom Pharaoh's daughter said,

"Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will pay the wages due you."

So the woman took the child and nursed him; and when the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She called his name Moses [drawn out]; "For," said she, "I drew him out of the water."

It was in those days that Moses, now grown up, went out to visit his fellow-countrymen and noted their heavy labor. He saw an Egyptian kill a Hebrew, one of his own countrymen; so, looking this way and that, and seeing that there was no one in sight, he killed the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. Another day, when he went out, there were two Hebrews fighting! So he said to him that was in the wrong,

"Why do you strike your companion?"

He replied,

"Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of murdering me as you did the Egyptian?"

Then Moses was afraid. "The incident must surely be known," he thought.

When Pharaoh heard about the matter, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to the land of Midian, and sat down beside a well.

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, who came to draw water, and fill the troughs to water their father's flock, but some shepherds came and drove them off. So Moses went

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to their rescue and watered their flock. When they came home to their father Reuel, he said,

“How did you come to get home so soon today?”

They said,

“An Egyptian protected us against the shepherds; he even drew water for us, and watered the flock.”

“Then where is he?” he said to his daughters. “Why did you leave the man behind? Invite him to have a meal.”

When Moses agreed to live with the man, he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah in marriage; and she bore a son, whom he named Gershom [immigrant]; “For,” said he, “I am an immigrant in a foreign land.”

In the course of this long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites, groaning under their bondage, cried for help, and their cry because of their bondage came up to God. God heard their moaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God saw the plight of Israel, and took cognizance of it.

While Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, he led the flock to the western side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, Horeb. Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire, rising out of a bush. He looked, and there was the bush burning with fire without being consumed! So Moses said,

“I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned up.”

When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to look at it, God called to him out of the bush,

“Moses, Moses!” he said.

“Here I am!” said he.

“Do not come near here,” he said; “take your sandals off

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your feet; for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. I am the God of your father," he said, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Then Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look at God.

"I have indeed seen the plight of my people who are in Egypt," the Lord said, "and I have heard their cry under their oppressors; for I know their sorrows, and I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and bring them up out of that land to a land, fine and large, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivvites, and Jebusites. Now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have also seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them; so come now, let me send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God,

"Who am I, to go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

"I will be with you," he said; "and this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you. When you bring the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God at this mountain."

"But," said Moses to God, "in case I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is his name?' what am I to say to them?"

"I am who I am," God said to Moses. Then he said, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites: 'I am' has sent me to you."

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Then Moses went off, and returning to his father-in-law Jethro, said to him,

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"Pray let me go back to my relatives in Egypt, to see whether they are still living."

"Go in peace," said Jethro to Moses.

The Lord said to Moses in Midian,

"Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead."

So Moses took his wife and sons, and mounted them on an ass, to return to the land of Egypt; Moses also took the staff of God in his hand.

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The Lord said to Aaron,

"Go into the desert to meet Moses."

So he went; and he met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. Then Moses told Aaron all the words with which the Lord had commissioned him and all the signs with which he had charged him. So Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites, and Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and performed the signs in the sight of the people, so that the people believed. When they heard that the Lord had taken note of the Israelites and had marked their plight, they bowed their heads in homage.

Following this, Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh,

"Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast for me in the desert.'"

But Pharaoh said,

"Who is the Lord that I should heed his plea to let Israel go? I have no knowledge of the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go."

They said,

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“The God of the Hebrews has paid us a visit; pray let us make a three days’ journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God, lest he strike us with pestilence or sword.”

“Moses and Aaron,” said the king of Egypt to them, “why would you draw the people from their work? Mind your own business.

“The people of the land are lazy as it is,” said Pharaoh, “and yet you would relieve them of their burdens!”

So that same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters in charge of the people and their foremen,

“You must no longer provide the people with straw for making bricks as previously; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But you must require of them the same quantity of bricks that they have been making in the past, without diminishing it at all; for they are lazy; that is why they are crying, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifices to our God.’ Let heavier work be loaded on the men, that they may give their attention to it and not to lying words.”

So the taskmasters and foremen of the people departed, and said to the people,

“Thus says Pharaoh: ‘I am not going to provide you with straw; go and get straw for yourselves wherever you can find it; but there is to be no reduction in your output.’”

So the people scattered all over the land of Egypt in search of stubble for straw, while the taskmasters urged them on, saying,

“Complete your daily quota of work, as when the straw was provided for you.”

The Israelite foremen were beaten, and Pharaoh’s taskmasters took them to task, saying,

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“Why have you not completed your prescribed amount of brick-making as usual, today just as previously?”

Then the Israelite foremen came and appealed to Pharaoh,

“Why do you treat your servants thus? There is no straw provided for your servants, and yet we are told to make bricks, and your servants get beaten, whereas the fault lies with you.”

But he said,

“You are lazy, lazy; that is why you say, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifices to the Lord.’ Be off now to your work; straw shall not be provided for you, but you must deliver the set quantity of bricks.”

Then the Israelite foremen saw that they were in an evil plight in having to say, “You must make no reduction in your daily quota of bricks.”

On leaving the presence of Pharaoh they met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, and said to them,

“May the Lord turn his attention to you, and punish you for giving us an unsavory reputation with Pharaoh and his courtiers, by putting a sword into their hands to slay us!”

Then Moses turned again to the Lord, and said,

“O Lord, why hast thou brought evil on this people? Why didst thou ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he has ill-treated this people; and thou hast done nothing to deliver thy people!”

The Lord said to Moses,

“Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; compelled by a mighty power he will not only let them go, but will drive them out of his land.”



THE ESCAPE FROM EGYPT

A series of dreadful plagues—blood, frogs, mosquitoes, gnats, cattle diseases, sores, hail, locusts and darkness—failed to convince Pharaoh that he must let the Israelites leave Egypt as Moses demanded. But the tenth plague was so terrible that Pharaoh could not hold out against it.

AT MIDNIGHT THE LORD STRUCK DOWN all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from Pharaoh's first-born who was to sit on his throne to the first-born of the captive in the dungeon, as well as all the first-born of the live stock. Then Pharaoh rose in the night, he and all his courtiers and all the Egyptians, and there arose a loud cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not someone dead. So he summoned Moses and Aaron in the night, and said,

“Withdraw at once from my people, both you and the Israelites, and go, serve the Lord as you suggested. Take both your

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flocks and herds as you suggested, and be gone; also ask a blessing on me."

The Egyptians became urgent with the people in their hurry to get them out of the land; "For," said they, "we shall all be dead." So the people snatched up their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-bowls being wrapped up in their cloaks upon their shoulders.

The Israelites followed the instructions of Moses; they asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, and the Lord had put the people in such favor with the Egyptians that they granted them their requests, and thus they despoiled the Egyptians.

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When the news was brought to the king of Egypt that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his courtiers changed their minds about the people.

"What ever have we done," they said, "to let Israel leave our service?"

So he hitched the horses to his chariot, and took his people with him; he took six hundred chariots, picked from all the chariots of Egypt, with charioteers in charge of them all. The Lord made Pharaoh, king of Egypt, obstinate, so that he pursued the Israelites, as they were going triumphantly out; the Egyptians pursued them, all of Pharaoh's horses and chariots, his cavalry and infantry, and overtook them, camping by the sea, near Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites raised their eyes, and there were the Egyptians setting out in pursuit of them! The Israelites were terribly afraid, and cried to the Lord. And they said to Moses,

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“Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the desert? What a way to treat us, bringing us out of Egypt! Isn’t this what we told you in Egypt would happen, when we said, ‘Leave us alone and let us serve the Egyptians; for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert.’”

But Moses said to the people,

“Do not be afraid; stand by and see how the Lord is going to save you today; for although you see the Egyptians today, you shall never see them again. The Lord will fight for you, while you have only to keep still.”

Then the Lord said to Moses,

“Why do you cry to me? Tell the Israelites to set forth; and then raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea, and thus divide it in two, so that the Israelites may proceed on dry ground right into the sea. Then I will make the Egyptians obstinate, so that they will go in after them, and thus I will gain honor through Pharaoh and all his infantry, chariots, and cavalry, so that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord, when I have gained honor through Pharaoh, his chariots, and cavalry.”

Then the angel of God who was accustomed to go in front of the army of Israel left his position and went behind them; the column of cloud also left its position in front of them and took its place behind them, and came between the army of Egypt and that of Israel, so that the cloud was there with its darkness, and the night passed by without the one coming near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord moved the sea away by means of a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land. The waters were di-

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vided, so that the Israelites proceeded on dry ground right into the sea, the waters forming a wall for them to right and left of them. Pursuing them, the Egyptians followed them right into the sea, all of Pharaoh's horses, his chariotry and cavalry. At the morning watch the Lord lowered himself toward the Egyptian army in the column of fire and cloud, and threw the Egyptian army into a panic. He clogged their chariot-wheels, and caused them to proceed with such difficulty that the Egyptians said,

"Let us flee from the Israelites; for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians."

Then the Lord said to Moses,

"Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may flow back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariotry and cavalry."

So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and as morning broke, the sea returned to its steady flow; and as the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord shook the Egyptians right into the sea. The water returned, and covered the chariotry and cavalry belonging to the whole army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not so much as one being left. But the Israelites had walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, the water forming a wall for them to right and left of them.

Thus did the Lord save Israel that day from the power of the Egyptians. So Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the seashore; and when Israel saw the mighty act which the Lord had performed against the Egyptians, the people stood in awe of the Lord and trusted the Lord and his servant Moses.

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Then the prophetess Miriam, the sister of Aaron, took a

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tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing, while Miriam responded to them in song,

“Sing to the Lord, for he has completely triumphed;
The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.”



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

After their escape from Egypt Moses led the people through the desert to Mount Sinai, and there at the foot of the mountain they were given the Ten Commandments which always afterwards shaped their ideas of right and wrong. These Commandments have also greatly influenced our own moral ideas; and as a brief statement of the laws that ought to govern human relations they have never been surpassed, except by Jesus when he said the two great commandments were to love the Lord your God with all your mind, soul and strength, and to love your neighbor as you do yourself.

ON THE THIRD NEW MOON after leaving the land of Egypt, on that very day the Israelites entered the desert of Sinai. Setting out from Rephidim, they entered the desert of Sinai, and camped in the desert; Israel camped there in front of the mountain, while Moses went up to God.

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On the third day, when morning came, there was thunder and lightning, with a heavy cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet-blast, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; its smoke ascended like the smoke from a kiln, so that the people all trembled violently. As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him with a thunder-peal.

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God spoke all these words, saying,

“Since I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of a state of slavery, you must have no other gods beside me.

“You must not carve an image for yourself in the shape of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is on the earth below, or that is in the waters under the earth; you must not pay homage to them, nor serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing children for the sins of their fathers, to the third or fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commands.

“You must not invoke the name of the Lord your God to evil intent; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who invokes his name to evil intent.

“Remember to keep the sabbath day holy. Six days you are

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to labor and do all your work, but on the seventh day, a sabbath to the Lord your God, you must not do any work at all, neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male or female slave, nor your cattle, nor the alien in your employ residing in your community; for in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, and the sea, together with all that is in them, but rested on the seventh day; that is how the Lord came to bless the seventh day and to hallow it.

“Honor your father and mother, that you may live long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

“You must not commit murder.

“You must not commit adultery.

“You must not steal.

“You must not bring a false charge against your fellow.

“You must not covet your neighbor’s home; you must not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything at all that is your neighbor’s.”



THE STORY OF BALAAM

After years of wandering like nomads in the desert, the Israelites approached the borders of Canaan. The king of Moab, east of the Jordan, was disturbed at their coming and summoned an Eastern prophet named Balaam to curse them and turn them back. Even the ass on which Balaam rode warned him against doing this, so he finally blessed them instead.

NOW BALAK, THE SON OF ZIPPOR, saw all that Israel did to the Amorites, so that Moab stood in great fear of the people, because they were so many; Moab stood in dread of the Israelites.

“Now this horde will lick up all the pasture around us, as an ox licks up the grass of a field,” said Moab to the elders of Midian.

Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of Moab at that time; so he sent messengers to Balaam, the son of Beor, at Pethor,

THE STORY OF BALAAM

which is near the Euphrates, to the land of the Ammonites, to summon him, saying,

“Here is a people come out of Egypt! They cover the whole face of the earth, and are settled opposite me. Now then, come and curse this people for me; for they are too strong for me; perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land; for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”

* * * * *

Then God came to Balaam in the night, and said to him,

“If it is to summon you that the men have come, be off and go with them; but it is only the message that I give you that you are to give.”

So, when Balaam rose next morning, he harnessed his ass, and went off with the chieftains of Moab.

The anger of God blazed at his going, and the angel of the Lord stationed himself on the road to obstruct him, as he rode on his ass, accompanied by his two slaves. When the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing on the road with his drawn sword in his hand, the ass turned out of the road, and went into the fields; but Balaam struck the ass to turn her back into the road. Then the angel of the Lord took his stand in a lane between vineyards, with a wall on either side; and when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she pressed herself against the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall, so that he struck her again. Then the angel of the Lord passed on further, and took his stand at a narrow place where there was no room to turn either to the right or to the left; and when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam, so that

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Balaam's anger blazed, and he struck the ass with his staff. Then the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to Balaam,

“What have I done to you that you should have struck me these three times?”

“Because you have made a toy of me,” said Balaam to the ass. “Would that there had been a sword in my hand, for then I would have killed you.”

The ass said to Balaam,

“Am I not your own ass, upon which you have ridden all your life long until this day? Have I ever been accustomed to deal thus with you?”

“No,” he said.

Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing on the road, with his drawn sword in his hand, whereupon he bowed his head, and fell on his face.

“Why have you struck your ass these three times?” the angel of the Lord said to him. “See, it was I who came forth to obstruct you; for your errand is displeasing to me. The ass saw me, and swerved from me these three times; unless she had swerved from me, I would surely have slain you just now, but would have spared her.”

“I have sinned,” said Balaam to the angel of the Lord; “for I did not know that it was you who stationed yourself on the road against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will go back.”

But the angel of the Lord said to Balaam,

“Go with the men; but it is only the message that I give you that you are to give.”

So Balaam went along with Balak's chieftains.

* * * * *

THE STORY OF BALAAM

So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, which overlooks Jeshimon.

“Build seven altars for me here,” said Balaam to Balak, “and offer seven bullocks and seven rams for me here.”

Balak did as Balaam said; he offered up a bullock and a ram on each altar. When Balaam saw that the Lord saw fit to bless Israel, he did not go in search of oracles as usual, but directed his gaze toward the desert. Raising his eyes, Balaam saw Israel grouped into their several tribes, whereupon the spirit of God came upon him, and he gave utterance to his oracle, saying,

“The oracle of Balaam, the son of Beor,
The oracle of the man who had evil designs,
The oracle of him who hears the words of God,
Who has a vision of the Almighty,
Prostrate, but with eyes open:
How fine your tents are, O Jacob,
Your dwellings, O Israel!
Like far-stretching valleys,
Like gardens beside a river,
Like aloes planted by the Lord,
Like cedars beside a stream.
Water shall flow from their buckets,
And their seed shall have abundant water;
Their king shall be taller than Agag,
And their kingdom shall be exalted.
God who brought them out of Egypt
Is like the horns of a wild-ox for them.
They shall devour nations that are their adversaries,
And break their bones in pieces,
And shatter their loins;

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They crouch, they lurk like a lion,
Like an old lion; who dare disturb them?
Blessed are they who bless you,
And cursed are they who curse you."

Then Balak's anger blazed against Balaam, and he struck his fists together.

"It was to curse my enemies that I summoned you," said Balak to Balaam; "and here you have actually blessed them these three times. So then, hurry back to your home! I intended to honor you greatly, but, as it is, the Lord has held you back from honor."

But Balaam said to Balak,

"Was it not indeed to the messengers whom you sent to me that I said, 'If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not violate the instructions of the Lord to do either good or bad of my own accord'? It is only what the Lord tells me that I can say. Now then, I leave at once for my own people; come, let me advise you what this people will do to your people in days to come."

Whereupon he gave utterance to his oracle, saying,

"The oracle of Balaam, the son of Beor,
The oracle of the man who had evil designs,
The oracle of him who hears the words of God,
And is acquainted with the knowledge of the Most High,
Who has a vision of the Almighty,
Prostrate, but with eyes open:
I see them, but not as they are now,
I behold them, but not as they are at present;
A star has come forth from Jacob,
A comet has risen from Israel,

THE STORY OF BALAAM

He has shattered the temples of Moab,
And the skulls of all the sons of Seth;
Edom has become a possession,
Seir has become a possession;
Israel has performed valiantly,
Jacob has conquered his enemies,
And has exterminated any survivors from Ar.”

* * * * *

Then Balaam rose, and departing, returned home; while
Balak also went his way.



JOSHUA ASKS THE SUN TO STAND STILL

Moses did not live to lead the Israelites into their Promised Land; it was Joshua who led them in the conquest of it. Each city was a little kingdom by itself, and Joshua on one occasion had to fight against five kings of the Amorites, as the early inhabitants of Palestine were called. His battle with them became very famous in Hebrew story, especially because in his eagerness Joshua called upon the sun and moon to stand still, to give him time to carry on the pursuit and win a great victory.

SO THE FIVE AMORITE KINGS, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, mustered their forces, and coming up with all their armies, they invested Gibeon, and attacked it. Then the Gibeonites sent this message to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal:

JOSHUA ASKS THE SUN TO STAND STILL

“Do not abandon your servants; come up quickly to our rescue, and help us; for all the Amorite kings inhabiting the highlands have gathered against us.”

So Joshua went up from Gilgal, accompanied by all the warriors, as well as all the seasoned troops.

“Do not be afraid of them,” the Lord said to Joshua; “for I am delivering them into your power; not one of them shall hold his own against you.”

So Joshua made a surprise attack upon them, by marching all night from Gilgal; and the Lord threw them into a panic before Israel, so that they inflicted great slaughter on them at Gibeon, and pursuing them in the direction of the slope of Beth-horon, they harried them all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. After they had fled from the Israelites, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, the Lord cast great stones from the sky upon them all the way to Azekah, so that they died, more dying from the hailstones than the Israelites slew with the sword.

It was on the day that the Lord put the Amorites at the mercy of the Israelites that Joshua spoke to the Lord, and in the presence of Israel said,

“O sun, stop at Gibeon;
And thou moon, at the valley of Aijalon!”

So the sun came to a stop, and the moon stood still, until the nation took vengeance on their foes. (Is this not written in the Book of Jashar?) The sun stood still at the zenith, and delayed its setting for about a whole day. Never before or since has there been a day like that, when the Lord heeded the cry of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel. Then Joshua, accompanied by all Israel, returned to the camp at Gilgal.



THE SONG OF DEBORAH

Even after the Israelites occupied Canaan, there continued to be fighting with the Canaanites. The tribes of Israel were not united except when some local champion or leader made his authority felt beyond his own tribe. Such leaders were called judges.

One of the first of these was the prophetess Deborah, who with her general, Barak, led the forces of five tribes—Ephraim, Benjamin, Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali—against the Canaanites under their general, Sisera, and won a great victory over them on the slopes of Mount Tabor. The war song describing their success is one of the oldest writings in the Old Testament.

THEN SANG DEBORAH AND BARAK, the son of Abinoam, on that day, saying:

“When locks were worn loose in Israel,

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

“O Lord, when thou camest forth from Seir,
When thou marchedst from the land of Edom,
The earth quaked, the heavens also shook,
The clouds, too, dripped water,
The mountains rocked at the presence of the Lord (that
is, Sinai),
At the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel.

“In the time of Shamgar, the son of Anath,
In the time of Jael, caravans had disappeared,
And travelers kept to the by-roads;
The peasantry had disappeared, they had disappeared in
Israel,
Until you arose, O Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.

“O riders on tawny asses, sitting on robes;

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And you who travel on the road, attend!
To the noise of musicians at the watering-places,
There the triumphs of the Lord will be recounted,
The triumphs of his peasantry in Israel.”

Then the people of the Lord went down to the gates.

“Awake, awake, Deborah;
Awake, awake, strike up the song!
Up, Barak, and take your captives,
O son of Abinoam!

“Then the remnant went down like nobles;
The people of the Lord went down like heroes.
Ephraim surged into the valley;
Following you came Benjamin among your clansmen,
From Machir came down commanders,
And from Zebulun those who carry the marshal’s staff.
The chieftains of Issachar were with Deborah and Barak;
In like manner Barak rushed into the valley among his
foot-soldiers.

“In the clans of Reuben great were the debates.
Why did you lounge among the ravines,
Listening to the bleating of the flocks?
In the clans of Reuben great were the debates.

“Gilead remained beyond the Jordan;
And Dan, why did he take service on alien ships?
Asher stayed by the sea-coast,
And remained by his creeks.

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

“Zebulun was a people who exposed themselves to death,
And Naphtali, on the heights of the field.
The kings came, they fought,
Then fought the kings of Canaan;
At Taanach, by the brooks of Megiddo,
They won no booty of silver.
From the heavens fought the stars;
From their courses they fought with Sisera

“The river Kishon swept them away;
A river barring the way was the river Kishon.
Bless thou, my soul, the might of the Lord!
Then the hoofs of the horses struck down
Their warriors by their furious plunging.
‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of the Lord,
‘Curse utterly its inhabitants;
For they came not to the help of the Lord,
To the help of the Lord like heroes.’
Most blessed of women may Jael be,
The wife of Heber, the Kenite;
Of bedouin women most blessed!
Water he asked; milk she gave;
In a lordly bowl she brought him curds.
She put her hand to the tent-pin,
And her right hand to the workman’s mallet;
And she struck down Sisera, she crushed his head;
She shattered and smashed his temple.
At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay prone;
At her feet he sank, he fell;
Where he sank, there he fell slain.

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“Out of the window she peered, and exclaimed,
The mother of Sisera, out of the lattice:
‘Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why is the clatter of his chariots so delayed?’
The wisest of her princesses replies;
She it is who makes answer to her:
‘Are they not finding, dividing booty?
A maid or two for each warrior;
Booty of dyed stuffs for Sisera,
Booty of dyed stuffs embroidered;
A couple of pieces of dyed embroidery for his neck as
booty.’

“Thus may all thine enemies perish, O Lord;
But let thy friends be like the rising of the sun in his
might.”

So the land enjoyed security for forty years.



THE EXPLOITS OF GIDEON

One of the Israelite leaders in the days of the Judges was Gideon. He led the people against the roving Midianites of the south who used to raid their lands and destroy their crops. Gideon used strange ways to choose his men and to surprise the Midianites' camp.

SO JERUBBAAL (THAT IS, GIDEON) and all the people that were with him rose early, and encamped near En-harod, while the camp of Midian was north of Gibeah-moreh in the valley. Then the Lord said to Gideon,

“The people that are with you are too many for me to deliver Midian into their power, lest Israel should glory over me, saying, ‘My own power has saved me.’ Now then, proclaim in the hearing of the people, ‘Whoever is afraid and timid must go home.’”

So Gideon put them to the test, and twenty-two thousand of

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the people went home, but ten thousand were left. Then the Lord said to Gideon,

“The people are still too many. Bring them down to the water, and let me test them there for you; he of whom I say to you, ‘This one is to go with you,’ shall go with you; but everyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one is not to go with you,’ must not go.”

So he brought the people down to the water, and the Lord said to Gideon,

“Everyone who laps up the water with his tongue as a dog laps, put off by himself; and likewise everyone who kneels down to drink.”

The number of those who lapped with their tongues was three hundred, while all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water. Then the Lord said to Gideon,

“With the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and will deliver Midian into your power; but let all the rest of the people go each to his home.”

Then they took the pitchers of the people in their hands, together with their trumpets; and he sent all the rest of the Israelites home, each to his tent, keeping only the three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

That very night the Lord said to him,

“Rise, descend on the camp; for I am delivering it into your power. But if you are afraid to go down alone, go down with your servant Purah to the camp, and hear what they are saying; and after that you will have the courage to descend on the camp.”

So he went down with his servant Purah to the outposts of

THE EXPLOITS OF GIDEON

the warriors that were in the camp. Now the Midianites, Amalekites, and all the Kedemites were lying along the valley like locusts for number, and their camels were innumerable, being like the sands on the seashore for number. Just as Gideon came, a man was telling his comrade a dream.

“I just had a dream,” he said, “that a crust of barley bread came tumbling into the camp of Midian, and coming to a tent, struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat.”

“That,” his comrade responded, “is nothing other than the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, an Israelite. God is delivering Midian and all the camp into his power.”

As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in reverence; and returning to the camp of Israel, he said,

“Up! for the Lord is delivering the camp of Midian into your power.”

Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and put trumpets into the hands of all of them, and empty pitchers, with torches inside the pitchers.

“Watch me,” he said to them, “and do likewise; as I reach the outskirts of the camp, see that you do just as I do; when I blow the trumpet, I and all those accompanying me, you also must blow your trumpets all around the camp, and say, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’”

When Gideon and the hundred men that accompanied him reached the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, the guards having just been posted, they blew their trumpets, and smashed the pitchers that were in their hands; whereupon the three companies blew their trumpets, and shat-

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tered their pitchers, holding the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right to blow them, and they cried, "For the Lord and for Gideon!" Then they stood each in his place around the camp, and all the camp ran; they cried out, and fled. When the three hundred trumpets were blown, the Lord set them to fighting with one another all through the camp; and the camp fled as far as Bethshittah in the direction of Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, near Tabbath. Israelites were mustered from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh to pursue Midian; and Gideon sent messengers all through the highlands of Ephraim, saying,

"Come down against Midian, and seize the streams against them as far as Bethbarah, and also the Jordan."

So all the Ephraimites were mustered, and seized the streams as far as Bethbarah, and also the Jordan. Capturing Midian's two chieftains, Oreb and Zeeb, they killed Oreb at Zur-Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at Jekeb-Zeeb. They pursued Midian, and the heads of Oreb and Zeeb they brought to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.



THE STORY OF SAMSON

The most famous of the judges was Samson. He performed the strangest feats of strength and daring, such as killing a young lion with his bare hands and carrying off the gates of a town in which he had been trapped. The Philistines were the chief enemies of the Israelites in his day, and it was against them that he was most active, so they were very anxious to take him prisoner. A woman named Delilah helped them do this; but in the end Samson took a fearful vengeance upon them, for he pulled down their temple upon their heads and died with them.

AFTERWARDS HE FELL IN LOVE with a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. Then the Philistine tyrants came to her, and said to her,

“Coax him, and find out why his strength is so great, and how we can overpower him and bind him helpless, and we will each give you eleven hundred shekels of silver.”

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So Delilah said to Samson,

“Do tell me why your strength is so great, and how you can be bound helpless?”

Samson said to her,

“If I were to be bound with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, I should become weak, and be like any other man.”

Then the Philistine tyrants brought her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Then, having men lie in wait in the inner room, she said to him,

“The Philistines are on you, Samson!”

But he snapped the bowstrings, as a strand of tow is snapped when it comes near fire. So the source of his strength was not discovered.

Then Delilah said to Samson,

“There, you have trifled with me, and told me lies! Do tell me now how you can be bound.”

So he said to her,

“If I were but bound with new ropes that have not been used, I should become weak, and be like any other man.”

So Delilah took new ropes, and bound him with them. Then she said to him,

“The Philistines are on you, Samson!”

(Meanwhile men were lying in wait in the inner room.)

But he snapped them off his arms like thread.

Then Delilah said to Samson,

“Up to now you have trifled with me, and told me lies. Tell me how you can be bound.”

So he said to her,

THE STORY OF SAMSON

“If you were to weave the seven locks of my head into the web, and beat them in with the pin, I should become weak, and be like any other man.”

So, when he was asleep, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web, and beat them in with the pin. Then she said to him,

“The Philistines are on you, Samson!”

But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled up both the loom and the web.

Then she said to him,

“How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when you do not confide in me? Three times already you have trifled with me, and have not told me why your strength is so great.”

At last, after she had pressed him with her words continually, and urged him, he got tired to death of it, and told her his whole secret.

“A razor has never been used on my head,” he said to her; “for I have been a Nazirite to God from conception. If I were to be shaved, my strength would leave me; I should become weak, and be like any other man.”

When Delilah saw that he had told her his whole secret, she sent for the Philistine tyrants, saying,

“Come up this once; for he has told me his whole secret.”

So the Philistine tyrants came to her, and brought the money in their hands. Then she put him to sleep on her knees, and summoning a man, she had him shave off the seven locks of his head, so that he became quite helpless, and his strength left him. Then she said,

“The Philistines are on you, Samson!”

He awoke from his sleep, and thought, “I shall get off as I

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have done over and over again, and shake myself free”—not knowing that the Lord had left him. Then the Philistines seized him, and gouged out his eyes, and bringing him down to Gaza, they bound him with bronze shackles, and he spent his time grinding in the prison. But the hair of his head began to grow again as soon as it had been shaved off.

Now the Philistine tyrants gathered to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon, and for merry-making, saying, “Our god has delivered our enemy Samson into our power!”

When the people saw him, they praised their god; “For,” said they, “our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the devastator of our lands, and him who slew us in bands.”

When they were in high spirits, they said,

“Summon Samson, that he may make sport for us!”

So Samson was summoned from the prison, and made sport before them. When they had stationed him between the pillars, Samson said to the attendant who was holding his hand,

“Put me so that I can feel the pillars on which the building is supported, that I may lean against them.”

Now the building was full of men and women, and all the Philistine tyrants were there; and on the roof there were about three thousand men and women, looking on while Samson made sport. Then Samson cried to the Lord, saying,

“O Lord God, pray remember me, and give me strength just this one time, O God, to wreak vengeance but once upon the Philistines for my two eyes!”

Then Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the building was supported, one with his right hand and the other with his left, and braced himself against them.

“Let me die with the Philistines!” said Samson.

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Then he pulled with all his might, so that the building fell in upon the tyrants and all the people that were in it. So those that he killed at his death were more than those that he had killed during his life.

Then his kinsmen and all his father's household came down, and took him up; and bringing him away, they buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had governed Israel for twenty years.



THE STORY OF RUTH

Ruth is a story of the days of the Judges. Ruth was not an Israelite but a woman of Moab, where her Hebrew husband found her. But after his death she did not remain in her own country. She took her widowed mother-in-law Naomi back to Judah and looked after her, adopting Naomi's people and religion as her own. Her son became the grandfather of the Jewish national hero, King David.

IN THE TIME WHEN THE JUDGES WERE in power a famine occurred in the land; so a certain man from Bethlehem in Judah emigrated to the country of Moab, along with his wife and two sons. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's Naomi, and the names of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. So they came to the country of Moab, and remained there. Then Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died; and she was left a widow, with her

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two sons. These married Moabite women, the name of one being Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there for about ten years, and then both Mahlon and Chilion died. Then, being bereft of her two children as well as of her husband, the woman, with her daughters-in-law, prepared to return from the country of Moab; for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had taken note of his people by giving them food. So she left the place where she was, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and they set out on the road to return to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law,

“Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the Lord deal as kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me! May the Lord enable you to find a home, each of you, in the house of her husband!”

Then she kissed them goodbye; but they lifted up their voices in weeping, and said to her,

“No, we will go back with you to your people.”

But Naomi said,

“Turn back, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Have I any more sons in my womb to become husbands for you? Turn back, my daughters; go your way; for I am too old to get married. If I should say that I have hopes both of getting married tonight and of bearing sons, would you wait for them until they were grown up? Would you forego marriage for them? No, my daughters; but I am very sorry for your sakes that the hand of the Lord has been raised against me.”

Then they lifted up their voices again in weeping, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

“See,” she said, “your sister-in-law has turned back to her

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own people and her own gods; turn back after your sister-in-law."

But Ruth said,

"Do not press me to leave you, to turn back from following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your god my god; wherever you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord requite me and worse, if even death separates me from you."

When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she ceased arguing with her. So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. Upon their arrival in Bethlehem the whole city became agitated over them, and the women said,

"Is this Naomi?"

But she said to them,

"Do not call me Naomi [pleasant]; call me Mara [bitter]; for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back destitute. Why should you call me Naomi, seeing that the Lord has afflicted me, and the Almighty has brought evil upon me?"

So Naomi returned from the country of Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law, Ruth, the Moabitess. They reached Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, belonging to the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

One day Ruth, the Moabitess, said to Naomi,

"Let me go to the fields and glean among the ears of grain after him with whom I may find favor."

"Go, my daughter," she said to her.

THE STORY OF RUTH

So off she went, and came and gleaned in the fields after the harvesters; and it was her fortune to come upon the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who belonged to the family of Elimelech. Just then Boaz himself came from Bethlehem.

“The Lord be with you!” he said to the harvesters.

“The Lord bless you!” they replied.

“Whose girl is this?” said Boaz to his overseer in charge of the harvesters.

“It is a Moabite girl who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab,” the overseer in charge of the harvesters answered. “She said, ‘Let me glean, if you please, and gather among the sheaves after the harvesters.’ So she came, and has remained since morning until now, without resting even a little.”

Then Boaz said to Ruth,

“Now listen, my girl. Do not go to glean in another field, nor leave this one, but stay here close by my women. Note the field that they are reaping, and follow them. Have I not charged the servants not to molest you? And when you are thirsty, go to the water jars, and drink some of what the servants draw.”

Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him,

“Why have I found such favor with you that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?”

Boaz in reply said to her,

“I have been fully informed of all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and of how you left your father and mother, and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not know before. May

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the Lord reward your conduct, and may you receive full recompense from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for shelter!"

"I thank you, sir," she said; "for you have cheered me, and have spoken comfortingly to your maidservant, even though I do not belong to your maidservants."

At mealtime Boaz said to her,

"Come here, and eat some of the bread, and dip your piece in the sour wine."

So she seated herself beside the harvesters, and he handed her roasted grain. She ate until she was satisfied, and had some left over. When she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his servants,

"Let her glean right among the sheaves, and do not be rude to her. Indeed pull out some bunches for her, and leave them for her to glean, and do not hinder her."

So she gleaned in the field until evening; then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it amounted to about an ephah of barley. She took it up, and coming into the city, showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned. Then she brought out and gave her what she had left over after being satisfied.

"Where did you glean today," her mother-in-law said to her. "Where did you work? Blessed be he who took such notice of you!"

So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked.

"Boaz is the name of the man with whom I worked today," she said.

Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law,

"Blessed be he of the Lord, whose goodness has failed neither the living nor the dead!"

THE STORY OF RUTH

“The man is a relative of ours,” Naomi said to her; “he is next after our next-of-kin.”

“Furthermore,” said Ruth, the Moabitess, “he said to me, ‘You must stay close by my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’”

“It is best, my daughter,” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, Ruth, “that you should go out with his women, so as not to be molested in another field.”

So she stayed close by the women working for Boaz, glean-ing until the end of both the barley and wheat harvests; then she returned to her mother-in-law.

the ears of everyone that hears it will tingle. At that time I will execute against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. You shall tell him that I am about to judge his house forever, for the wrong-doing which he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not rebuke them. Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the wrong-doing of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

So Samuel lay until morning; then he rose early in the morning, and opened the double doors of the house of the Lord. But Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said,

"Samuel, my son."

"Here I am," he said.

"What is the thing that he spoke to you?" he said. "Do not, I beg of you, hide it from me. May God requite you and worse, if you hide anything from me of the whole matter which he spoke to you."

Then Samuel told him everything, and concealed nothing from him.

"It was the Lord," he said, "let him do what is good in his sight."

Thus Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was one accredited as a prophet of the Lord, since the Lord continued to reveal himself in Shiloh; for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel. But Eli was exceedingly old, and his sons kept right on making their conduct hateful before the Lord. Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel.



DAVID AND GOLIATH

When Saul was king there was war again with the Philistines, who lived along the seacoast to the west of Israel. The Philistines' champion was a giant named Goliath, whom none of the Israelites dared to meet in single combat. But a young shepherd named David, coming up from his home at Bethlehem with provisions for his brothers in the army, heard the giant's blasphemous boasts and went out alone to fight with him. How David overcame him and won a victory for Israel is one of the great Jewish hero stories.

NOW THE PHILISTINES MUSTERED their armed forces for war, and they were gathered together at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and they encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim. Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together and encamped in the valley of Elah; and they drew up in line of battle facing the Philistines. The Philistines

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were stationed on the mountain on one side, and the Israelites were stationed on the mountain on the other side, and the valley was between them. Then there came out a champion from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a helmet of bronze upon his head, and he was clad with a coat of mail of bronze scales, whose weight was about five thousand shekels. He had greaves of bronze upon his legs and a javelin of bronze between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his iron spear weighed six hundred shekels; and his shield-bearer went before him.

He stood and shouted to the battle-line of Israel and said to them,

“Why have you come out to draw up the line of battle? Am I not a Philistine and you the servants of Saul? Choose for yourselves a man and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and can kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I overcome him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.

“I challenge the ranks of Israel this day,” said the Philistine, “give me a man that we may fight together.”

When Saul and all Israel heard the words of the Philistine, they were terrified and panic-stricken.

Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, who had eight sons. The man was old in the days of Saul, well advanced in years. The three eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the war; and the names of these three sons who went to the war were Eliab the eldest, the second Abinadab, and the third Shammah. But David was the youngest. The three eldest had followed Saul;

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but David went to and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

So the Philistine drew near morning and evening and took his stand for forty days. Then Jesse said to David his son,

"Take now for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain and these ten loaves and take them quickly to the camp to your brothers. But bring these ten cheeses to the captain of the thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers and take assurance of them."

Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah fighting with the Philistines.

So David rose up early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper and took and went, as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the intrenchment just as the army was going forth to the battle-line, raising the shout of battle. Israel and the Philistines drew up the battle-lines facing each other. Then David left his supplies in care of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the battle-line and came and greeted his brothers. While he was talking with them, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, was seen coming up from the Philistine lines and he spoke the same words as before; and David heard them. Then all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were panic-stricken. The men of Israel said,

"Have you seen this man who comes up? Surely to taunt Israel he comes up. Whoever overcomes him, the king will make very rich and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel."

Then said David to the men standing by him,

"What shall be done for the man who overcomes yonder Philistine and takes away the reproach of Israel? For who is

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this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the battle-lines of the living God?"

The people replied to him according to the above words, saying,

"Thus shall it be done to the man who overcomes him."

Now Eliab, his eldest brother, heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger blazed against David, and he said,

"Why now have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the desert? I know your insolence, and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down to look at the battle."

"What have I now done?" said David. "Is there not a cause?"

And turning away from him to another, he spoke as before; and the people returned answer as at the first. Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul; and they took him and brought him before Saul.

Then David said to Saul,

"Let not my lord's courage fail him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

"You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him," said Saul to David, "for you are but a youth and he has been a warrior from his youth."

But David said to Saul,

"Your servant has been a shepherd with his father's flock; and when a lion or a bear would come and take a sheep out of the flock, I would go out after him and attack him and deliver it from his mouth; and if he rose up against me, I would seize him by his beard and wound him and kill him. Your servant has slain both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine

DAVID AND GOLIATH

shall be as one of them, since he has taunted the battle-lines of the living God.

“The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion, and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine,” said David.

So Saul said to David,

“Go, and may the Lord be with you.”

Saul clothed David with his garments, and put a helmet of bronze on his head, and equipped him with a coat of mail. He girded David with his sword over his outer garments; and he struggled in vain to go, for he had not tried them.

“I cannot go with these, for I have not tried them,” said David to Saul.

So David put them off him.

But he took his stick in his hand, and chose five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in his bag, and with his sling in his hand he advanced toward the Philistine. The Philistine began cautiously to approach David, having the bearer of his shield directly in front of him; and when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he scorned him; for he was youthful and ruddy, and of attractive appearance.

“Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks?” said the Philistine to David.

The Philistine also cursed David by his gods; and the Philistine said to David,

“Come to me and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.”

Then David said to the Philistine,

“You come to me with a sword and a spear and a javelin,

But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts,

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The God of the battle-lines of Israel whom you have taunted.

This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand,
That I may slay you and sever your head from your body;

And I will this day give your dead body and the dead of the camp of the Philistines

To the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth,
That all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,
And that all this assembly may know

That not with sword and spear does the Lord deliver;

For the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hands."

Now when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David also hastened and ran toward the line to meet the Philistine. David put his hand in his bag and took from it a stone and slung it and it struck the Philistine on his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the earth. So David overpowered the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine, and slew him, although there was no sword in David's hand. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of its sheath, and slew him, and cut off his head with it.

Now when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled; and the men of Israel and Judah arose and raised a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance to Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded of the Philistines fell down on the way from Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron. When the Israelites returned from pursuing the Philistines,

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they plundered their camp, but David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem; and he put his armor in his tent.

When Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army,

“Whose son is this lad, Abner?”

“As you live, O king, I do not know,” said Abner.

“Inquire whose son the youth is,” said the king.

When David returned from slaying the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the Philistine’s head in his hand; and Saul said to him,

“Whose son are you, my lad?”

“The son of your servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite,” said David.



DAVID AND JONATHAN

Saul had a son named Jonathan, and David and he were the closest friends. Their friendship has always been famous. The Philistines finally defeated the Israelites in a great battle, on Mount Gilboa, and Saul and Jonathan were killed. David was greatly moved by the news of his friend's death and expressed his grief in a lament or dirge, for he was a poet as well as a soldier. King Saul had driven David from his court, but David mourned over him as well as over Jonathan who had been his faithful friend.

THEN DAVID CANG THIS DIRGE over Saul and Jonathan his son (behold, it is written in the Book of Jashar to instruct the Judeans), and he said,

“Your beauty, O Israel,
Upon your heights is slain.
How have the heroes fallen!

DAVID AND JONATHAN

“Tell it not in Gath,
Announce it not in the streets of Askelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

“O mountains of Gilboa, let neither dew fall,
Nor rain be upon you, O fields of death!
For there was the shield of the mighty thrown aside,
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

“From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
Nor empty returned the sword of Saul.

“Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided;
Swifter than eagles were they,
They were stronger than lions.

“O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet daintily,
Who adorned your garments with gold and jewels;
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of battle!

“O Jonathan! by your death am I mortally wounded,
I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan!
You were exceedingly dear to me,
Your love was more marvelous to me than the love of
women.

“How have the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!”



ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN

From time to time great religious leaders or prophets appeared among the Israelites. It is the work of these men that gives Israel's history its chief importance. Among the greatest of them were Elijah and his pupil and follower Elisha, who prophesied in Northern Israel. It was Elijah who put to death the idolatrous prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel and then had to flee for his life from the anger of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. The deep impression he made upon his times is shown in the story of his death. He was a stormy prophet and his life ended in a whirlwind and storm.

NOW WHEN THE LORD TOOK UP ELIJAH by a whirlwind into the heavens, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha,

“I pray you, remain here, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.”

ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN

But Elisha said,

“As the Lord lives and as you yourself are alive, I will not leave you.”

So they went down to Bethel. Then the members of the prophetic group who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him,

“Do you know that today the Lord is about to take away your master from being your leader?”

And he said,

“Yes, I know it; hold your peace.”

Again Elijah said to him,

“Elisha, tarry here, I pray you, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.”

But he said,

“As the Lord lives and as you yourself are alive, I will not leave you.”

So they entered Jericho. And the members of the prophetic group who were in Jericho came near Elisha and said to him,

“Do you know that the Lord is about to take away your master from being your leader today?”

And he said,

“Yes, I know it. Hold your peace.”

Elijah again said to him,

“Remain here, I pray you, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.”

But he said to him,

“As the Lord lives and as you yourself are alive, I will not leave you.”

So the two of them went on.

Now fifty men of the prophetic group went and stood op-

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posite them at a distance, while they two stood by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up and struck the waters; thereupon they were divided on either side so that the two of them passed over on dry ground. Now as soon as they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha,

“Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.”

Then Elisha said,

“Let there be now a twofold share of your spirit upon me!”

But he said,

“You have asked a hard thing; still, if you see me as I am being taken from you, so shall it be with you; but if not, it shall not be so.”

Now as they were going along conversing, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

And as Elisha looked, he cried out,

“My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!”

But he saw him no more, and he took hold of his own garments and tore them in two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him and returned and stood by the brink of the Jordan. Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the waters and said,

“Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?”

And when he had struck the waters they were divided on either side so that Elisha passed over.

And when the members of the prophetic group who were at Jericho opposite him saw him, they said,

“The spirit of Elijah is upon Elisha.”



THE VISION OF ISAIAH

Almost twenty-seven hundred years ago there lived in Jerusalem a rich young man named Isaiah. He saw the wickedness of the times and one day, as he worshiped in the little temple, he had a vision which made him realize that he must speak out against it. All the rest of his life he worked as a prophet, fearlessly warning the king, preaching to the people and training a little group of his pupils to carry on his work. Isaiah was the great preacher of the holiness of God, and he will always be famous for his splendid eloquence. All this great work of his began with his vision that day in the temple when he heard God say, "Whom shall I send?" and answered, "Here I am! Send me."

IN THE YEAR THAT KING UZZIAH DIED, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and uplifted, with the skirts of his robe filling the temple. Over him stood seraphs, each having six

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wings, with two of which he covered his face, with two he covered his loins, and with two he hovered in flight. And they kept calling to one another, and saying,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts;
The whole earth is full of his glory.”

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the sound of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.

Then said I,

“Woe to me! for I am lost;
For I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell among a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King,
The Lord of hosts.”

Then flew one of the seraphs to me, with a red-hot stone in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar; and he touched my mouth with it, and said,

“See! this has touched your lips;
So your guilt is removed, and your sin forgiven.”

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,

“Whom shall I send,
And who will go for us?”

Whereupon I said,
“Here I am! Send me.”

So he said,

“Go and say to this people:
‘Keep on hearing, but understand not;
And keep on seeing, but know not!’
Make the mind of this people gross,
Dull their ears, and besmear their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,

THE VISION OF ISAIAH

And have a mind to understand, and turn, and be healed.”
Then I said,
“How long, O Lord?”
And he said,
“Till cities lie waste, without inhabitant,
And houses without man;
And the soil be left a desolation,
And the Lord have removed man far away,
And many be the forsaken places in the midst of the land.
Even if a tenth remain in it,
This must pass through the fire again,
Like a terebinth, or an oak,
Whose stump remains when it is felled.”



JEREMIAH'S CALL TO BE A PROPHET

About a hundred years after Isaiah, a very young man named Jeremiah felt that God was calling him to be a prophet. He lived in the little town of Anathoth, four miles outside of Jerusalem. He felt much too young and insignificant to be a prophet, but he obeyed the call and courageously preached what he believed was the will of God. He lived in trying times, for he saw Jerusalem captured by the Babylonians, the city and temple destroyed and the people carried away into captivity. Yet Jeremiah did not lose his faith in God, for he knew that religion was not a national but a personal thing, the relation of the human heart to God. Throughout his long life he constantly preached this message to his people.

THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO ME, saying,
"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
And before you were born I set you apart,

JEREMIAH'S CALL TO BE A PROPHET

I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Then I said,

“Ah, Lord God! I cannot speak;

For I am only a youth.”

But the Lord said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’;

For to all to whom I send you shall you go,

And all that I command you shall you speak.

Do not be afraid of them;

For I am with you to deliver you,”

Is the oracle of the Lord.

Then the Lord stretched forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me,

“See! I put my words in your mouth;

This day I give you authority over the nations and kingdoms,

To root up and to pull down, to wreck and to ruin,

To build and to plant.”



THE STORY OF JOB

Job was a very good man, happy and prosperous and greatly respected by everybody. But suddenly misfortune began to overtake him. His flocks and herds were stolen or destroyed, and his children were killed in a storm which blew down their house. Job was deeply grieved but he did not lose his faith in God. Then he himself was stricken with ~~leprosy~~. But still his faith did not waver. His friends came to see him, but they had no real comfort to offer. They could only suppose that Job had committed some sin for which he was being punished. But Job insisted that he had not done anything wrong. Finally he came to see that he could not hope to understand all the experiences of life but that he must leave his destiny to God's wisdom and mercy.

THREE WAS A MAN IN THE LAND OF UZ whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and he feared God and shunned wickedness. Now there were born to him

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seven sons and three daughters. And his property was seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels and five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses and a very large number of slaves. So that man was the greatest of all the people of the East. His sons would go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day; and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When the days of feasting had gone round, Job would send and sanctify them, and he would get up early in the morning and offer sacrifices according to the number of them all; for Job said,

“Perhaps my children have sinned,
And cursed God in their thoughts.”

Thus would Job do always.

Now one day when the heavenly beings had come to stand in the presence of the Lord, and the Satan too had come among them, the Lord said to the Satan,

“Whence do you come?”

And the Satan answered the Lord, saying,

“From roaming in the earth and from going to and fro therein.”

And the Lord said to the Satan,

“Have you noticed my servant Job,

That there is none like him in the earth,

A man perfect and upright, who fears God and shuns wickedness?”

But the Satan answered the Lord, saying,

“Has Job feared God for nothing?

Hast thou not hedged him round about,

And his house and all that belongs to him?

Thou hast blessed the labor of his hands;

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And his wealth has spread abroad in the land.
But now, put forth thy hand,
And touch whatsoever he has:
He will curse thee to thy face!"

And the Lord said to the Satan,

"Well, all that he has is in your power;
Only upon himself you shall not lay your hand."

Then the Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Now one day when his sons and daughters were eating and were drinking wine in the house of their oldest brother, a messenger came to Job, saying,

"While the oxen were plowing,
And the she-asses grazing close by,
The Sabeans fell upon them and seized them;
They smote the servants with the edge of the sword;
And I only have escaped alone to tell you."

While he was yet speaking, another came, saying,

"The fire of God fell down from the heavens,
And burned up the flocks and the servants and consumed them;

And I only have escaped alone to tell you."

While he was yet speaking, another came, saying,

"The Chaldeans formed three divisions,
And swooped down upon the camels and seized them,
And smote the servants with the edge of the sword;
And I only have escaped alone to tell you."

While he was yet speaking, another came, saying,

"As your sons and your daughters were eating
And were drinking wine in the house of their oldest brother,

THE STORY OF JOB

A mighty wind came from beyond the wilderness,
And smote the four corners of the house,
So that it fell upon the young folks and they died.
And I only have escaped alone to tell you."

Then Job arose and tore his mantle and shaved his head and fell to the earth and worshiped; and he said,

"Naked did I come forth from my mother's womb,
And naked shall I return thither.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Notwithstanding all this, Job did not sin; nor did he charge anything unseemly against God.

One day when the heavenly beings had come to present themselves before the Lord, and when the Satan too had come among them to present himself before the Lord, the Lord said to the Satan,

"Whence do you come?"

The Satan answered the Lord, saying,

"From roaming in the earth and from going to and fro therein."

And the Lord said to the Satan,

"Have you noticed my servant Job,

That there is none like him in the earth,

A perfect and upright man, who fears God and shuns wickedness?

He still holds fast to his integrity,

Though you incited me against him, to ruin him without cause."

Then the Satan answered the Lord, saying,

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“Skin for skin!

All that a man has will he give for his life.

Now, just put forth thy hand,

And touch his bone and his flesh:

He will curse thee to thy face!”

And the Lord said to the Satan,

“Behold, he is in your power; but preserve his life.”

Then the Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with a bad leprosy from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; so that he took a potsherd with which to scrape himself as he sat in the midst of the ash-heap. So his wife said to him,

“Do you yet hold fast to your integrity?

Curse God and die!”

But he said to her,

“You speak as one of the foolish women might speak.

Should we, indeed, receive good from God,

And should we not receive evil?”

Notwithstanding all this, Job did not sin with his lips.

When the three friends of Job heard all this disaster that had befallen him, they came each from his place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; for they had arranged together to come to condole with him and to comfort him. When they lifted up their eyes from afar, they did not recognize him; so they raised their voices and wept. Then they tore, each one, his mantle, and they cast dust over their heads toward the heavens. Then they sat down with him upon the ground for seven days and seven nights; and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his affliction was

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very severe. Afterwards Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.

* * * * *

After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, then the Lord said to Eliphaz, the Temanite,

“My anger is hot against you and your two friends, because you have not spoken regarding me what is true, as my servant Job has. So now take for yourselves seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up a burnt-offering for yourselves, and my servant Job will pray for you; for his plea will I accept, that I deal not harshly with you, because you have not spoken regarding me what is true, as my servant Job has.”

Then Eliphaz, the Temanite, and Bildad, the Shuhite, and Zophar, the Naamathite, went and did as the Lord had told them; and the Lord accepted the plea of Job.

Then the Lord restored the fortune of Job when he interceded for his friends; and the Lord doubled all Job’s possessions. And all his brothers and all his sisters and all his friends came to him as of old, and they did eat food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the misfortune that the Lord had brought upon him. And they gave him each a piece of gold and each a golden ring.

So the Lord blessed the end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. And he had seven sons and three daughters. He named the first Jemimah, the second Kezia, and the third Keren-happuch. There

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were not found women as fair as the daughters of Job in all the land. And their father gave them a heritage among their brothers.

Thereafter Job lived one hundred and forty years; and he saw his sons and his sons' sons, four generations. So Job died, an old man, satisfied with life.



THE STORY OF JONAH

Jonah is one of the greatest missionary stories in the world. It is about a prophet whom God told to go to Nineveh and preach repentance and forgiveness to the Assyrians. Jonah did not want the Assyrians, who had oppressed his people, to repent and be saved, so he boarded a ship bound for the other end of the Mediterranean Sea. When a great storm came up, Jonah admitted to the sailors what he had done, and they threw him overboard. But he was saved by a huge fish and escaped to land.

Again he was called to go to Nineveh and this time he obeyed. He went there and preached, and the Ninevites repented and were forgiven. But Jonah was disappointed and displeased. He did not want them to be saved. He had not learned that the wideness of God's mercy could take in even the hated people of Nineveh.

THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO JONAH, the son of Amitai, as follows:

“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.”

But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa, where he found a ship, bound for Tarshish. He paid his fare, and went aboard, to go with them to Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord.

But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, so that there was a great storm on the sea; and it was thought that the ship would be broken up. Then the sailors were frightened, and they cried each one to his god; and they threw overboard the stuff that was in the ship, in order to lighten it.

But Jonah had gone down into the hold of the ship, and was lying fast asleep. So the captain approached him, and said to him,

“Why are you sleeping? Get up; call upon your god. Perhaps that god will bethink himself of us, that we perish not.”

Then they said, one to another,

“Come, let us cast lots, that we may know upon whose account this disaster has befallen us.”

So they cast lots; and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then they said to him,

“Tell us, now, for what reason this disaster has befallen us. What is your business? Whence do you come? What is your country? And from what people are you?”

So he said to them,

“I am a Hebrew; and I stand in awe of the Lord, the God of the heavens, who made both the sea and the dry land.”

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Then the men were exceedingly terrified, and said to him, "What a wicked thing you have done!"

For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord; because he had told them. Whereupon they said to him,

"What shall we do with you, that the sea may become calm for us?"

For the sea was running higher and higher. Then he said to them,

"Pick me up, and cast me into the sea, so that the sea may be calm for you; for I know that this great storm is upon you because of me."

But the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to the dry land, yet could not; for the sea was running higher and higher against them. So they cried unto the Lord, saying,

"O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life; and lay not up against us innocent blood; for thou, O Lord, dost do as thou dost please."

Then they picked up Jonah and threw him overboard; and the sea ceased from its raging.

Thereupon the men feared the Lord profoundly; and they sacrificed to the Lord and made vows.

Now the Lord had assigned a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God, from the belly of the fish, saying,

"Out of my trouble I called unto the Lord, and he answered me.

From the heart of Sheol I called for help; thou didst hear my voice.

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For thou hadst cast me into the depths, into the heart of the sea,

And a flood encompassed me.

All thy breakers and thy waves passed over me.

Then I said, 'I am cast out of thy sight;

How shall I ever again look upon thy holy temple?'

The waters closed in over my life; the deep surrounded me.

Sea-weed was wound around my head.

To the roots of the hills I went down.

The earth with its bars was against me forever.

But thou didst bring up my life from the Pit, O Lord, my God!

When I was losing consciousness, I remembered the Lord; And my prayer unto thee entered thy holy temple.

Those who heed false vanities forsake their piety,

But I will sacrifice to thee with the voice of thanksgiving;

What I have vowed, I will pay.

Deliverance belongs to the Lord."

Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah forth upon the dry land.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, as follows:

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim unto it the proclamation which I shall tell you."

So Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh, as the Lord had said. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, the walk through it requiring three days. And Jonah had gone a day's journey into the city, when he made proclamation, saying,

"Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

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Whereupon the men of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and clothed themselves in sackcloth, from the greatest unto the least of them. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, put off his robe, put on sackcloth, and sat upon the ash-heap. He also sent messengers through Nineveh, saying,

“By decree of the king and his nobles, as follows: Let neither man nor beast, cattle nor sheep, taste a thing; let them not feed, and let them not drink water. But let them put on sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them call aloud unto God; and let each one turn from his wicked way, and from whatsoever violence he has in hand. Who knows but that God will turn and relent, turning from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?”

Then God saw their actions, that they had turned from their wicked way. So God relented of the evil which he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not.

But Jonah was greatly displeased and very angry. So he prayed to the Lord, saying,

“O Lord, is not this what I said while I was still upon my own soil? Therefore I hastened to flee to Tarshish. For I knew that thou wast a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in grace, and relenting of evil. Now, therefore, O Lord, take my life, I pray thee, from me. For I am better off dead than alive!”

Then the Lord said,

“Are you so very angry?”

Then Jonah went forth from the city, and sat down to the east of the city; and he made a booth for himself there, and sat under it in the shade, until he should see what would happen in the city. So the Lord God gave orders to a gourd, and it

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grew up above Jonah so as to be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; and Jonah was very glad because of the gourd. Then God ordered a worm, when the dawn came up on the morrow, to smite the gourd, so that it wilted. And when the sun arose, God ordered a burning east wind; and the sun smote down upon Jonah's head so that he fainted, and asked that he might die, and said,

“I am better off dead than alive!”

Then God said to Jonah,

“Are you so very angry over the gourd?”

And he replied,

“I am angry enough to die!”

Then the Lord said,

“You have had pity on the gourd, for which you did not toil; nor did you raise it; which grew in a night, and perished in a night! And should not I, indeed, have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than a hundred and twenty thousand infants, that cannot distinguish between their right hand and their left, and many cattle?”



THE FIERY FURNACE

The Babylonians captured Jerusalem in 597 B.C. and took a great many of the Jews away to Babylon as captives. This captivity made a deep impression on the Jews; and centuries later, when they were struggling for independence from Syria, the thought of what their people had endured in Babylonia, years before, comforted and encouraged them. Their Syrian conquerors were trying to force them into idolatry, and it helped them to remember how heroically their forefathers had resisted such efforts to destroy their religion. One of the greatest stories of those old days in Babylon is that of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the Fiery Furnace.

KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR MADE AN IMAGE OF GOLD, sixty cubits in height, and six cubits in breadth, which he set up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to assemble the satraps, the prefects, the

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governors, the councilors, the treasurers, the judges, the justices, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And when the satraps, the prefects, the governors, the councilors, the treasurers, the judges, the justices, and all the officials of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, the herald called aloud,

“To you is given a command, O peoples, nations, and tongues, that as soon as you hear the sound of the horn, the pipe, the lyre, the trigon, the harp, the bagpipe, and every other kind of musical instrument, you shall fall down and prostrate yourselves before the image of gold which King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and prostrate himself shall forthwith be cast into the midst of a furnace of flaming fire.”

As soon, then, as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, the pipe, the lyre, the trigon, the harp, and every other kind of musical instrument, all the peoples, nations, and tongues fell down and prostrated themselves before the image of gold which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Thereupon certain Chaldeans came forward, and laid an accusation against the Jews, saying to King Nebuchadnezzar,

“O king, live forever! You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, the pipe, the lyre, the trigon, the harp, the bagpipe, and every other kind of musical instrument, shall fall down and prostrate himself before the image of gold; and whoever does not fall down and prostrate himself shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of flaming fire. Now there are certain Jews whom you have appointed in charge

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of the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, pay no regard to you; they do not serve your gods, nor do they prostrate themselves before the image of gold which you have set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be brought; and when these men were brought before the king, Nebuchadnezzar addressed them, saying,

"Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods, nor prostrate yourselves before the image of gold which I have set up? Now if you are ready, as soon as you hear the sound of the horn, the pipe, the lyre, the trigon, the harp, the bagpipe, and every other kind of musical instrument, to fall down and prostrate yourselves before the image which I have made, well and good; but if you will not prostrate yourselves, you shall forthwith be cast into the midst of a furnace of flaming fire; and what god is there who shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, saying,

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we need not waste words in discussing this matter with you. If our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us, he will deliver us out of the furnace of flaming fire, and out of your hand, O king; but even if not, be it known to you, O king, we will not serve your gods, nor prostrate ourselves before the image of gold which you have set up."

At these words Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and his face was distorted with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times more than it was usual for it to be heated; then he ordered cer-

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tain of the strongest men in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the furnace of flaming fire. Thereupon these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of flaming fire. So sharp was the king's order, and so very hot was the furnace, that the flame of the fire slew the men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the furnace of flaming fire.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar became alarmed; and he rose up hastily, and addressed his ministers, saying,

“Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?”

They answered the king, saying,

“Certainly, O king.”

He answered, saying,

“Well, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, quite unscathed; and the appearance of the fourth resembles one of the gods.”

Then King Nebuchadnezzar approached the mouth of the furnace of flaming fire, and spoke, saying,

“O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!”

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the midst of the fire; and when the assembled satraps, prefects, governors, and king's ministers saw that the fire had had no effect on the persons of these men, that the hair of their heads had not been singed, nor their cloaks damaged, and that no smell of burning had settled on them, Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying,

“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel to deliver his servants who trusted in

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him, and frustrated the king's order, by surrendering their own persons, rather than serve and worship any god, except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or tongue, that speaks a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be hewn limb from limb, and their houses made a dunghill; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this manner."

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.



THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

These heroic memories of the captivity in Babylonia centered about the figure of Daniel, the greatest of the Wise Men. The story of Belshazzar's feast and the sacrilegious use he made of the sacred vessels taken from the temple at Jerusalem, with the mysterious hand of destiny writing the nation's sentence on the palace wall, is one of the most aramatic in all literature.

KING BELSHAZZAR MADE A GREAT FEAST for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Inflamed by the taste of the wine, Belshazzar gave orders to bring in the vessels of gold and silver, which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from the temple at Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his consorts and his concubines, might drink out of them. So they brought in the vessels of gold and silver, which had been taken away from the temple at Jerusalem; and the

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king and his lords, his consorts and his concubines, drank out of them. As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. Forthwith there appeared the fingers of a man's hand, which wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand; and the king saw the palm of the hand as it wrote. Then the king's face changed color, as his thoughts upset him; the joints of his loins relaxed, and his knees knocked against each other. The king called aloud for the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers to be brought in; and the king addressed the wise men of Babylon, saying,

“Whosoever reads this writing, and gives me the interpretation of it, shall be clothed with purple, and shall have a chain of gold round his neck, and shall be third ruler in the kingdom.”

But when all the king's wise men came in, they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation of it. Then King Belshazzar was greatly upset, and he changed color; his lords also were thrown into consternation. At the cries of the king and his lords, the queen-mother came into the banqueting-hall; and the queen-mother addressed him, saying,

“O king, live forever! Let not your thoughts upset you, nor your face change color. There is in your kingdom a man in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father there was found in him light, and understanding, and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, so that King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, because there was found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, surpassing ability, knowledge, understanding, and skill in interpreting dreams, solving riddles,

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and unraveling knots. Let Daniel be called in, then, and he will give the interpretation."

So Daniel was brought in before the king; and the king addressed Daniel, saying,

"You are Daniel, of the exiles of Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah! I have heard of you, that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light, and understanding, and surpassing wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me, that they might read this writing, and make known to me the interpretation of it; but they could not give the interpretation of the matter. I have heard of you, however, that you can give interpretations, and unravel knots. Now, if you can read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation of it, you shall be clothed with purple, and shall have a chain of gold round your neck, and shall be third ruler in the kingdom."

Then Daniel answered the king, saying,

"Keep your gifts for yourself, and give your rewards to another; but I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation of it. O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father the kingdom, with its greatness, its glory, and its majesty; and because of the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, nations, and tongues trembled in fear before him; whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down. But when his mind was lifted up, and his spirit became obstinate, so that he bore himself proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and deprived of his glory, he was driven from among men, and his mind was made like that of the beasts, his dwelling was with the wild asses, he was given

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grass to eat like an ox, and his person was drenched by the dew of the heavens, till he learned that the Most High God rules the kingdom of men, setting over it whom he will. And you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this, but have lifted yourself up against the Lord of the heavens, in that you have had the vessels of his house brought in before you, and have drunk wine out of them—you and your lords, your consorts and your concubines—and have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which can neither see nor hear nor understand, and have not glorified the God in whose hand your breath is, and to whom belong all your ways. From him, then, has the palm of the hand been sent, and this writing inscribed. This is the writing that has been inscribed: *Mene, Tekel, and Peres*. And this is the interpretation of the matter: *Mene*—God has numbered your kingdom, and brought it to an end; *Tekel*—you have been weighed in the scales, and found wanting; *Peres*—your kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”

Then Belshazzar gave orders, and Daniel was clothed with purple, and had a chain of gold put round his neck, while a proclamation was made concerning him, that he should be third ruler in the kingdom.

That night Belshazzar, the king of Chaldea, was slain; and Darius, the Mede, received the kingdom, being then about sixty-two years of age.



DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS

Another of the great stories about Daniel has to do with his faithfulness in praying to God in Babylon, even though it was forbidden by the heathen king. Daniel was in high favor with King Darius, and the jealous courtiers planned to entrap him and compel the king to put him to death. But nothing could shake Daniel's unswerving loyalty to his religion.

IT PLEASED DARIUS TO SET OVER the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, to administer the whole kingdom, and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might be responsible to them, and the king might suffer no loss. And Daniel distinguished himself above all the presidents and satraps, because surpassing ability was in him; and the king was disposed to set him over the whole kingdom.

Then the presidents and satraps sought to find some ground

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of complaint against Daniel in connection with his administration of the kingdom; but they could find no ground of complaint or fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was to be found in him. So these men said,

“We shall find no ground of complaint against this Daniel, unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”

Then these presidents and satraps thronged to the king, and addressed him as follows:

“O King Darius, live forever! All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the ministers and the governors, have agreed in council that the king should lay down a statute, and pass a strict interdict, to the effect that whosoever shall offer a petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, lay down the interdict, and sign the document, so that it may not be changed, in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which is unalterable.”

Accordingly, King Darius signed the document containing the interdict. Now, when Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went to his house, which had windows in its upper chamber open toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he continued kneeling upon his knees, praying, and giving thanks before his God, as formerly he used to do. Then these men thronged in, and found Daniel offering petitions and supplications before his God. So they approached the king, and questioned him concerning the king's interdict,

“Did you not sign an interdict, to the effect that whosoever should offer a petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, should be cast into the den of lions?”

The king answered, saying,

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"The thing stands fast, in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which is unalterable."

Then they answered the king, saying,

"This Daniel, of the exiles of Judah, pays no regard to yourself, O king, nor to the interdict which you have signed, but three times a day he continues offering his own petitions."

When the king heard these words, he was deeply grieved, and applied his mind to saving Daniel; till sunset he exerted himself to rescue him. Then these men thronged to the king, and said to the king,

"You are aware, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or statute which the king lays down can be changed."

So the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought forward, and cast into the den of lions. Then the king spoke to Daniel, saying,

"May your God, whom you worship so regularly, save you!"

Then a stone was brought forward, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, as well as with the signet of his lords, so that no change might be made in respect to Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and his sleep fled from him. Then at dawn, as soon as it was light, the king arose, and went in haste to the den of lions. When he came near the den, where Daniel was, the king cried out with a sorrowful voice, and spoke to Daniel, saying,

"O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you worship so regularly, been able to save you from the lions?"

Then Daniel answered the king, saying,

"O king, live forever! My God has sent his angel, and has

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shut the mouths of the lions, so that they have not injured me; because I was found innocent before him, and before you also, O king, have I done no injury."

At these words the king was exceedingly glad, and gave orders that Daniel should be taken out of the den. And when Daniel was taken out of the den, no kind of injury was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. Then the king gave orders, and the men who had accused Daniel were brought forward—they, and their children, and their wives—and cast into the den of lions; and before they had reached the bottom of the den, the lions fell upon them, and crushed all their bones to pieces. Then King Darius wrote as follows to all the peoples, nations, and tongues, that live in all the earth:

"Peace be multiplied to you! I hereby make a decree that throughout all the kingdom which I rule men shall tremble in reverence before the God of Daniel;

For he is the living God,
Immutable forever;
His kingdom is one that shall never be overthrown,
And his dominion is one that shall endure to the end;
He saves, and he delivers,
He does signs and wonders
In the heavens and in the earth;
It is he who has saved Daniel
From the power of the lions."

So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, and during the reign of Cyrus the Persian.



THE PSALMS

The hymns and prayers the Jews used in the Temple form the book of Psalms, which is both a hymn book and a prayer book. Many of our hymns are based upon these Psalms. In some ways they are the most perfect expression of religion that has ever been made. Here are a few of the best known and best loved of them.

The First Psalm

THE PROSPERITY OF THE PIous

HOW HAPPY IS THE MAN who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stood in the way of sinners,
Nor sat in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in his law does he study day and night.
For he is like a tree planted by streams of water,

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That yields its fruit in its season,
And whose leaf does not wither;
And whatsoever he does he brings to success.

The wicked are not so;
But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous.
But the way of the wicked will perish.

The Nineteenth Psalm

GOD'S PRAISE IN THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL UNIVERSE

The heavens are telling the glory of God,
And the sky shows forth the work of his hands.
Day unto day pours forth speech,
And night unto night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard;
Yet their voice goes forth through all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world.

In them he has pitched a tent for the sun,
Who is like a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber,
And rejoices like a strong man to run the course;
From one end of the heavens is his starting-point,
And his circuit is to the other end;
And nothing is hid from the heat thereof.

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The law of the Lord is perfect,
renewing the life;
The decree of the Lord is trustworthy,
making wise the simple;
The precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
The command of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
The fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring forever.
The judgments of the Lord are true,
they are also right;
They are more valuable than gold,
and much fine gold;
Also sweeter than honey,
and the droppings of the honeycomb.

Thy servant also is instructed by them,
In keeping them there is great reward.
Who can discern his errors?
Of unconscious ones, hold me guiltless!
Moreover, restrain thy servant from wilful ones,
May they not rule over me!
Then shall I be blameless, and be acquitted of much trans-
gression.
May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart
Be acceptable before thee,
O Lord, my rock and my avenger!

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The Twenty-third Psalm

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want;
In green pastures he makes me lie down;
Beside refreshing waters he leads me.
He gives me new life;
He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the darkest valley,
I fear no harm; for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff—they comfort me.
Thou layest a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord to old age.

The Twenty-fourth Psalm

THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE GOOD MAN

The earth is the Lord's and its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.
For he founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the ocean-currents.

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Who can ascend into the hill of the Lord?
And who can stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has had no desire for falsehood,
And has not sworn to a lie.
He will receive a blessing from the Lord,
And justification from the God of his deliverance.
This is the generation of those who search for him,
Who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift yourselves up, O ancient doors,
That the king of glory may come in!
Who, then, is the king of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle!
Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift yourselves up, O ancient doors,
That the king of glory may come in!
Who, then, is the king of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the king of glory!

The Ninetieth Psalm

A PLEA FOR GOD'S MERCY

O Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place
Throughout the ages;
Before the mountains were born,

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Or ever thou hadst brought forth the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art, O God.

Thou turnest man back to dust,
And sayest, "Return, O sons of man."
For a thousand years in thy sight
Are but as yesterday when it is past,
And as a watch in the night.

Thou cuttest them off; they are as a dream;
They are like grass which shoots up in the morning;
In the morning it flourishes and shoots up;
At evening it is cut down and withers.

For we are destroyed by thine anger,
And by thy wrath we are ruined.
Thou dost place our crimes before thee,
Our unconscious sins in the light of thy face.

For all our days vanish in thy wrath;
We come to an end; our years are like a cobweb wiped
away.
The length of our life is seventy years,
Perchance through strength eighty years;
But their whole extent is travail and trouble;
For it is quickly cut off and we fly away.

Who knows the power of thine anger?
Or thy wrath according to the fear due thee?

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So teach us to number our days
That we may obtain an understanding heart.

Return, O Lord; how long?
And have compassion upon thy servants.
Satisfy us in the morning with thy kindness,
That we may shout with joy and be glad throughout our
days.
Gladden us in proportion to the days wherein thou hast
afflicted us,
The years wherein we have seen disaster.

May thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy splendor be upon their children.
May the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
And the work of our hands do thou establish upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

The Hundred and Twenty-fifth Psalm

UNSHAKABLE FAITH

They who trust in the Lord
Are like Mount Zion which cannot be moved,
But abides forever.
Even as the mountains encircle Jerusalem,
So the Lord encircles his people,
Henceforth and forever.

THE PSALMS

For the wicked scepter will not rest upon the lot of the righteous,
That the righteous may not put forth their hands unto wrong.

Do good, O Lord, to the good,
And to them that are upright in heart.
But those who make their ways crooked—
May the Lord make them go with malefactors!
Peace be upon Israel!

The Hundred and Thirtieth Psalm

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

Out of the depths I cry to thee, O Lord!
O Lord, hear my voice!
Let thine ears be attentive
To my supplianting voice.

If thou, O Lord, shouldst record iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But with thee there is forgiveness,
That thou mayest be revered.

I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
And for his word I hope.
I wait for the Lord,
More than watchmen for the dawn,
Watchmen for the dawn.

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Hope, O Israel, in the Lord,
For with the Lord is kindness,
And with him is plenteous redemption.
For he will redeem Israel
From all its guilt.



THE STORY OF ESTHER

Esther is the story of a beautiful Jewish girl who, with the help of her uncle Mordecai, rose to be queen of Persia. But the enemies of the Jews stirred up the Persian king, her husband, to order the slaughter of all the Jews in his kingdom. This put Esther in a very trying position, but she showed herself as brave as she was beautiful.

NOW WHEN MORDECAI LEARNED all that had been done, Mordecai tore his garments and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and cried out with a loud and bitter lamentation. He even came before the king's gate; for none might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. Moreover in every province wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. When Esther's maidens and her

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eunuchs came and told her, the queen was exceedingly distressed, and she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might take off his sackcloth; but he did not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai, to learn what this was and why it was. So Hathach went forth to Mordecai to the open square of the city which was in front of the king's gate. Then Mordecai told him all that had happened to him and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. He also gave him a copy of the writing of the decree that was given out in Shushan to destroy them, that he might show it to Esther and inform her and charge her to go in to the king to implore him and to make request before him for her people.

So Hathach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a message to Mordecai, saying,

"All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that whoever, whether man or woman, comes to the king into the inner court who is not summoned, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except those to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter that he may live; but I have not been summoned to come to the king these thirty days."

So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

Then Mordecai told them to return answer to Esther,

"Think not to yourself that you will escape inside the royal palace any more than all the rest of the Jews. For if you remain altogether silent at this time, then relief and deliverance will

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rise up for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's house will perish; and who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Thereupon Esther told them to return answer to Mordecai,

"Go, assemble all the Jews that are to be found in Shushan and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I also and my maidens will likewise fast, and then I will go to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

So Mordecai went his way and did just as Esther commanded him.

So it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes, and stood in the inner court of the king's palace directly opposite the king's apartment; and the king was sitting upon his royal throne in the royal palace opposite the entrance of the palace. When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she met with favor in his sight, and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. So Esther drew near and touched the top of the scepter.

Then the king said to her,

"What is your wish, Queen Esther, and what is your request? It shall be given you even to the half of the kingdom."

"If it please the king," said Esther, "let the king and Haman come today to a banquet that I have prepared for him."

"Bring Haman in haste that he may fulfil Esther's wish," said the king.

So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Then the king said to Esther at the banquet of wine,

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“Whatever your petition, it shall be granted you; and whatever your request, even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be performed.”

So Esther answered and said,

“My petition and my request is: If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to my banquet that I shall prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said.”

Then Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart. But when Haman saw Mordecai at the king’s gate, and he neither stood up nor moved for him, Haman was filled with wrath against Mordecai. Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and returned home, and sent and brought in his friends and Zeresh his wife. Thereupon Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches and the multitude of his children and every instance where the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and the servants of the king.

“Even Esther the queen,” said Haman, “has permitted no man but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she has prepared, and tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king. Yet all this does not satisfy me so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.”

Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him,

“Let a gallows fifty cubits high be erected and in the morning speak to the king that Mordecai may be hanged on it. Then go in merrily with the king to the banquet.”

The idea pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

On that night sleep deserted the king, and he gave orders to bring the book of records of the chronicles, and they were read

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before the king; and there was found written what Mordecai had told concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, of those who guarded the threshold, who had sought to lay hands on King Xerxes. Whereupon the king said,

"What honor and dignity have been bestowed on Mordecai for this?"

Then the king's servants who ministered to him said,
"Nothing has been done for him."

"Who is in the court?" said the king.

Now Haman had entered the outer court of the king's house to request the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. So the king's servants said to him,

"Behold, Haman is standing in the court."

"Let him enter," said the king.

So Haman came in, and the king said to him,

"What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman said to himself,

"Whom would the king delight to honor more than myself?"

So Haman said to the king,

"For the man whom the king delights to honor, let royal garments be brought, which the king has worn, and a horse which the king has ridden, on the head of which a royal crown is set. Let the garments and the horse be delivered to one of the king's most noble princes, and let them clothe the man whom the king delights to honor and cause him to ride on horseback through the open square of the city, and proclaim before him, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'"

Then the king said to Haman,

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“Make haste, and take the garments and the horse, as you have said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew who sits at the king’s gate. Let nothing fail of all that you have spoken.”

So Haman took the garments and the horse and clothed Mordecai and caused him to ride through the open square of the city and proclaimed before him,

“Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.”

Then Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman hurried home, mourning and with his head covered. When Haman had related to Zeresh his wife and to all his friends all that had befallen him, his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him,

“If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, be of the Jewish race, you will make no headway against him, but will surely fall before him.”

While they were still speaking with him, the king’s eunuch arrived and hurriedly brought Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

So the king and Haman went in to drink with Esther the queen; and the king said again to Esther on the second day of the banquet of wine,

“Whatever your petition, Queen Esther, it shall be granted you; and whatever your request, even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be performed.”

Then Esther the queen answered, saying,

“If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition and my people at my request; for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold as

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male and female slaves, I would have held my peace, since the distress would not have been worth disturbing the king."

Then King Xerxes spoke and said to Esther the queen,

"Who is he, and where is he who dares presume in his heart to do so?"

"An adversary and an enemy, this wicked Haman," said Esther.

Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen; and when the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden, Haman stood up to beg for his life from Esther the queen, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. Accordingly when the king returned from the palace garden to the apartment of the banquet of wine, Haman was prostrate upon the couch upon which Esther was.

"Will he violate the queen in my presence in the house?" said the king.

As the words left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king said,

"There is indeed the gallows fifty cubits high standing in the house of Haman, which Haman has made for Mordecai, who spoke good for the king."

"Hang him on it," said the king.

So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath abated.

THE HEBREWS' LIBRARY

The Hebrews gathered their favorite books into a library of thirty-nine books, which we call the Old Testament and which form the first part of the Bible. It falls into four parts, Law, History, Poetry and Prophecy.

The Law

GENESIS

EXODUS

LEVITICUS

NUMBERS

DEUTERONOMY

The Histories

JOSHUA

JUDGES

RUTH

FIRST SAMUEL

SECOND SAMUEL

FIRST KINGS

SECOND KINGS

FIRST CHRONICLES

SECOND CHRONICLES

EZRA

THE HEBREWS' LIBRARY

NEHEMIAH

ESTHER

The Poetical Books

JOB

PSALMS

PROVERBS

ECCLESIASTES

SONG OF SONGS

The Prophets

The Greater Prophets

ISAIAH

JEREMIAH

LAMENTATIONS

EZEKIEL

DANIEL

The Lesser or Minor Prophets

HOSEA

JOEL

AMOS

OBADIAH

JONAH

MICAH

NAHUM.

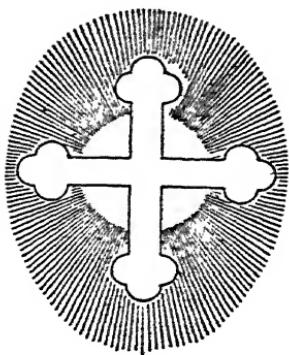
HABAKKUK

ZEPHANIAH

HAGGAI

ZECHARIAH

MALACHI



THE NEW TESTAMENT



THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

Almost two thousand years ago there was born in the Judean town of Bethlehem a child who was to do more than anyone else to cheer and help his fellow men. His name was Jesus. His Jewish followers thought of him as the Christ, the long-expected deliverer of their nation; and Greeks saw in him their Savior, the Son of God. His message of hope and good will made a deep impression that spread far and wide. In after years many stories were told and songs were sung about his birth and his childhood. Some of these we find in the Gospels.

IN THE DAYS WHEN HEROD WAS KING OF JUDEA, . . . the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a maiden there who was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The maiden's name was Mary. And the angel went into the town and said to her,

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“Good morning, favored woman! The Lord be with you!”

But she was startled at what he said, and wondered what this greeting meant. And the angel said to her,

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have gained God’s approval. You are to become a mother and you will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his forefather David, and he will reign over Jacob’s house forever; his reign will have no end.”

Mary said to the angel,

“How can this be, when I have no husband?”

The angel answered,

“The holy Spirit will come over you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason your child will be called holy, and the Son of God. . . . For nothing is ever impossible for God.”

And Mary said,

“I am the Lord’s slave. Let it be as you say.”

Then the angel left her.

* * * * *

In those days an edict was issued by the Emperor Augustus that a census of the whole world should be taken. It was the first census, taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So everyone went to his own town to register. And Joseph went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he belonged to the house and family of David, to register with Mary, who was engaged to him and who was soon to become a mother. While they were there, the time came for her child to be born, and

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she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped him up, and laid him in a manger, for there was no room for them at the inn.

There were some shepherds in that neighborhood keeping watch through the night over their flock in the open fields. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terribly frightened. The angel said to them,

“Do not be frightened, for I bring you good news of a great joy that is to be felt by all the people, for today, in the town of David, a Savior for you has been born who is your Messiah and Lord. And this will prove it to you: You will find a baby wrapped up and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly there appeared with the angel a throng of the heavenly army, praising God, saying,

“Glory to God in heaven and on earth!

Peace to the men he favors!”

When the angels left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

“Come! Let us go over to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, that the Lord has told us of!”

And they hurried there, and found Mary and Joseph, with the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they told what had been said to them about this child. And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, but Mary treasured up all they had said, and pondered over it. And the shepherds went back glorifying God and praising him for all that they had heard and seen in fulfilment of what they had been told.

* * * * *

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Now after the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem in Judea, in the days of King Herod, astrologers from the east arrived at Jerusalem, and asked,

“Where is the newly born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star rise and we have come to do homage to him.”

When King Herod heard of this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. So he called together all the high priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They said,

“At Bethlehem in Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

“And you, Bethlehem in Judah’s land,

You are by no means least important among the leading places of Judah,

For from you will come a leader

Who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.”

Then Herod secretly sent for the astrologers, and found out from them the exact time when the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said to them,

“Go and inquire particularly about the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, so that I may go and do homage to him too.”

So they obeyed the king and went, and the star which they had seen rise led them on until it reached the place where the child was, and stopped above it. When they saw the star, they were very glad, and they went into the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they threw themselves down and did homage to him. They opened their treasure boxes and presented the child with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, as they had been divinely warned in a dream not to go

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another way.

When they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, and said,

“Wake up! Take the child and his mother and make your escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave. For Herod is going to look for the child in order to make away with him.”

Then he awoke and took the child and his mother by night and took refuge in Egypt, to fulfil what the Lord said by the prophet, “I called my son from Egypt.”

Then Herod saw that he had been tricked by the astrologers, and he was very angry, and he sent and made away with all the boys in Bethlehem and in all that neighborhood who were two years old or under, for that was the time he had learned from the astrologers by his inquiries. Then the saying was fulfilled which was uttered by the prophet Jeremiah,

“A cry was heard in Ramah!

Weeping and great lamenting!

Rachel weeping for her children,

And inconsolable because they were gone.”

But when Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said,

“Wake up! Take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.”

Then he awoke, and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the place of his father, Herod, he was afraid to return there; and being warned in a dream, he took refuge in

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the region of Galilee, and he went and settled in a town called Nazareth, in fulfilment of the saying of the prophets,

“He shall be called a Nazarene.”

* * * * *

And the child grew up and became strong and thoughtful, with God’s blessing resting on him.

His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Pass-over Festival. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual to the festival and made their customary stay. When they started back the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents’ knowledge. They supposed that he was somewhere in the party, and traveled until the end of the first day’s journey, and then they looked everywhere for him among their relatives and acquaintances. As they could not find him, they went back to Jerusalem in search of him. And on the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and everyone who heard him was astonished at his intelligence and at the answers he made. When his parents saw him they were amazed, and his mother said to him,

“My child, why did you treat us like this? Here your father and I have been looking for you, and have been very anxious.”

He said to them,

“How did you come to look for me? Did you not know that I must be at my Father’s house?”

But they did not understand what he told them. And he went back with them to Nazareth and obeyed them. And his mother treasured all these things up in her mind.

As Jesus grew older he gained in wisdom and won the approval of God and men.



THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

When Jesus was a young man, a great religious movement swept over Palestine, where he lived. A rough desert prophet, John the Baptist, appeared in the wild country along the Jordan, calling upon people to change their way of living and to acknowledge their sins by being baptized in the river. When Jesus appeared in the crowd, John felt unworthy to baptize him, but Jesus persuaded him. As Jesus left the water, he suddenly had a great sense of God's approval. The spirit of God seemed to come over him and he felt that God had given him a great work to do in the world.

IN THOSE DAYS JOHN THE BAPTIST APPEARED, and preached in the desert of Judea.

“Repent!” he said, “for the Kingdom of Heaven is coming!”

It was he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, when he said,

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“Hark! Someone is shouting in the desert,
‘Get the Lord’s way ready!
Make his paths straight!’”

John wore clothing made of hair cloth, and he had a leather belt around his waist, and he lived on dried locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole Jordan valley went out to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, in acknowledgment of their sins.

* * * * *

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him. But John dissuaded him, and said,

“I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

But Jesus answered,

“Let it be so this time, for it is right for us to do everything that God requires.”

Then John consented. And when Jesus was baptized, he went right up out of the water, and the heavens opened, and he saw the Spirit of God come down like a dove and light upon him, and a voice from heaven said,

“This is my Son, my Beloved! This is my Chosen.”



THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Even Jesus had difficulties and doubts. He knew his message would be too hard and high for the mass of his people, who wanted an earthly kingdom set up, yet he must not yield to them and compromise, for he knew that he had something far better to give them. Soon after his baptism he went off alone into the desert to struggle with his problem. Long afterwards he told his disciples in vivid figures of how his faith had risen above these temptations.

THEN JESUS WAS GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and nights, and after it he was famished. And the tempter came up and said to him,

“If you are God’s son, tell these stones to turn into bread!”
But he answered,

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“The Scripture says, ‘Not on bread alone is man to live, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God!’”

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the summit of the Temple, and said to him,

“If you are God’s son, throw yourself down, for the Scripture says,

“‘He will give his angels orders about you,

And they will lift you up with their hands

So that you may never strike your foot against a stone!’”

Jesus said to him,

“The Scripture also says, ‘You shall not try the Lord your God.’”

Again the devil took him to a very high mountain, and he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor, and said to him,

“I will give all this to you, if you will fall on your knees and do homage to me.”

Then Jesus said to him,

“Begone, Satan! For the Scripture says, ‘You must do homage to the Lord your God, and worship him alone!’”

Then the devil left him, and angels came and waited on him.



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Jesus now began to go about Galilee, where he lived, curing the sick and preaching that people must reform their lives, for the Kingdom of God was close at hand. Great crowds gathered to hear him preach, and he spoke to them with tremendous power. Some of his greatest teachings are gathered up in what we know as the Sermon on the Mount, because it was preached on a mountainside. It shows what people must do and be, in order to belong to what he called the Kingdom of Heaven.

WHEN HE SAW THE CROWDS OF PEOPLE he went up on the mountain. There he seated himself, and when his disciples had come up to him, he opened his lips to teach them. And he said,

“Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them!

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“Blessed are the mourners, for they will be consoled!

“Blessed are the humble-minded, for they will possess the land!

“Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for uprightness, for they will be satisfied!

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy!

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God!

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called God’s sons!

“Blessed are those who have endured persecution for their uprightness, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them!

“Blessed are you when people abuse you, and persecute you, and falsely say everything bad of you, on my account. Be glad and exult over it, for you will be richly rewarded in heaven, for that is the way they persecuted the prophets who went before you!

“You are the salt of the earth! But if salt loses its strength, how can it be made salt again? It is good for nothing but to be thrown away and trodden underfoot. You are the light of the world! A city that is built upon a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and put it under a peck-measure; they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. Your light must burn in that way among men so that they will see the good you do, and praise your Father in heaven.

“Do not suppose that I have come to do away with the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to do away with them but to enforce them. For I tell you, as long as heaven and earth endure, not one dotting of an *i* or crossing of a *t* will be dropped from the Law until it is all observed. Anyone, therefore, who weakens one of the slightest of these commands, and teaches

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others to do so, will be ranked lowest in the Kingdom of Heaven; but anyone who observes them and teaches others to do so will be ranked high in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your uprightness is far superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never even enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

“You have heard that the men of old were told, ‘You shall not murder,’ and ‘Whoever murders will have to answer to the court.’ But I tell you that anyone who gets angry with his brother will have to answer to the court, and anyone who speaks contemptuously to his brother will have to answer to the great council, and anyone who says to his brother ‘You cursed fool!’ will have to answer for it in the fiery pit! So when you are presenting your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother has any grievance against you, leave your gift right there before the altar and go and make up with your brother; then come back and present your gift. Be quick and come to terms with your opponent while you are on the way to court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you, you will never get out again until you have paid the last penny!

“You have heard that men were told, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman with desire has already committed adultery with her in his heart. But if your right eye makes you fall, tear it out and throw it away, for you might better lose one part of your body than have it all thrown into the pit! If your right hand makes you fall, cut it off and throw it away, for you might better lose one part of your body than have it all go down to the pit!

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“They were told, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife on any ground, except unfaithfulness, makes her commit adultery, and anyone who marries her after she is divorced commits adultery.

“Again, you have heard that the men of old were told, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but you must fulfil your oaths to the Lord.’ But I tell you not to swear at all, either by heaven, for it is God’s throne, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. You must not swear by your own head, for you cannot make one single hair white or black. But your way of speaking must be ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ Anything that goes beyond that comes from the evil one.

“You have heard that they were told, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist injury, but if anyone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other to him too; and if anyone wants to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat too. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go two miles with him. If anyone begs from you, give to him, and when anyone wants to borrow from you, do not turn away.

“You have heard that they were told, ‘You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for your persecutors, so that you may show yourselves true sons of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on bad and good alike, and makes the rain fall on the upright and the wrongdoers. For if you love only those who love you, what reward can you expect? Do not the very tax-collectors do that? And if you are polite to your brothers and no one else, what is there remarkable in that? Do not the very heathen do that? So you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

“But take care not to do your good deeds in public for people to see, for, if you do, you will get no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you are going to give to charity, do not blow a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and the streets, to make people praise them. I tell you, that is all the reward they will get! But when you give to charity, your own left hand must not know what your right hand is doing, so that your charity may be secret, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you.

“When you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they like to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the squares, to let people see them. I tell you, that is the only reward they will get! But when you pray, go into your own room, and shut the door, and pray to your Father who is unseen, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not repeat empty phrases as the heathen do, for they imagine that their prayers will be heard if they use words enough. You must not be like them. For God, who is your Father, knows what you need before you ask him. This, therefore, is the way you are to pray:

‘Our Father in heaven,
Your name be revered!
Your kingdom come!

Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven!

Give us today bread for the day,
And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors.
And do not subject us to temptation,
But save us from the evil one.’

or if you forgive others when they offend you, your heavenly Father will forgive you too. But if you do not forgive others

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when they offend you, your heavenly Father will not forgive you for your offenses.

“When you fast, do not put on a gloomy look, like the hypocrites, for they neglect their personal appearance to let people see that they are fasting. I tell you, that is all the reward they will get. But when you fast, perfume your hair and wash your face, so that no one may see that you are fasting, except your Father who is unseen, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you.

“Do not store up your riches on earth, where moths and rust destroy them, and where thieves break in and steal them, but store up your riches in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy them, and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. For wherever your treasure is, your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If then your eye is sound, your whole body will be light, but if your eye is unsound, your whole body will be dark. If, therefore, your very light is darkness, how deep the darkness will be! No slave can belong to two masters, for he will either hate one and love the other, or stand by one and make light of the other. You cannot serve God and money. Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about life, wondering what you will have to eat or drink, or about your body, wondering what you will have to wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body than clothes? Look at the wild birds. They do not sow or reap, or store their food in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more account than they? But which of you with all his worry can add a single hour to his life? Why should you worry about clothing? See how the wild flowers grow. They do not toil or spin, and yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his splendor was

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never dressed like one of them. But if God so beautifully dresses the wild grass, which is alive today and is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more surely clothe you, you who have so little faith? So do not worry and say, 'What shall we have to eat?' or 'What shall we have to drink?' or 'What shall we have to wear?' For these are all things the heathen are in pursuit of, and your heavenly Father knows well that you need all this. But you must make his kingdom, and uprightness before him, your greatest care, and you will have all these other things besides. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries of its own. Let each day be content with its own ills.

"Pass no more judgments upon other people, so that you may not have judgment passed upon you. For you will be judged by the standard you judge by, and men will pay you back with the same measure you have used with them. Why do you keep looking at the speck in your brother's eye, and pay no attention to the beam that is in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Just let me get that speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a beam in your own? You hypocrite! First get the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see to get the speck out of your brother's eye.

"Do not give what is sacred to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces. Ask, and what you ask will be given you. Search, and you will find what you search for. Knock, and the door will open to you. For it is always the one who asks who receives, and the one who searches who finds, and the one who knocks to whom the door opens. Which of you men when his son asks him for some bread will give him a

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stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake? So if you, bad as you are, know enough to give your children what is good, how much more surely will your Father in heaven give what is good to those who ask him for it! Therefore, you must always treat other people as you would like to have them treat you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

“Go in at the narrow gate. For the road that leads to destruction is broad and spacious, and there are many who go in by it. But the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few that find it.

“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you disguised as sheep but are ravenous wolves underneath. You can tell them by their fruit. Do people pick grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles? Just so any sound tree bears good fruit, but a poor tree bears bad fruit. No sound tree can bear bad fruit, and no poor tree can bear good fruit. Any tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and burned. So you can tell them by their fruit. It is not everyone who says to me ‘Lord! Lord!’ who will get into the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that Day, ‘Lord! Lord! Was it not in your name that we prophesied, and by your name that we drove out demons, and by your name that we did many mighty acts?’ Then I will say to them plainly, ‘I never knew you! Go away from me, you who do wrong!’

“Everyone, therefore, who listens to this teaching of mine and acts upon it, will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. And the rain fell, and the rivers rose, and the winds blew, and beat about that house, and it did not go down, for its foundations were on rock. And anyone who listens to this teach-

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ing of mine and does not act upon it, will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. And the rain fell and the rivers rose, and the winds blew and beat about that house, and it went down, and its downfall was complete."

When Jesus had finished this discourse, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them like one who had authority and not like their scribes.



PREACHING FROM A BOAT

Jesus did most of his preaching out of doors, on the mountainside, or by the Sea of Galilee, the beautiful lake on the shores of which he lived. Once the crowd was so great that he had to get into a boat to preach to them. He liked to teach in parables—short stories or figures which he used as illustrations and which had a special meaning. These stories were drawn from the everyday life about him; they were about sowing seed, making bread, catching fish, and finding pearls or treasures. But they made people think more deeply and kindly, and they made them remember what he said.

THAT SAME DAY JESUS WENT OUT of his house and was sitting on the seashore. And such great crowds gathered about him that he got into a boat and sat down in it, while all the people stood on the shore. And he told them many things in figures, and said to them,

PREACHING FROM A BOAT

* * * * *

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while people were asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. And when the wheat came up and ripened, the weeds appeared too. And the owner’s slaves came to him and said, ‘Was not the seed good that you sowed in your field, sir? So where did these weeds come from?’ He said to them, ‘This is some enemy’s doing.’ And they said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, for in gathering up the weeds you may uproot the wheat. Let them both grow together until harvest time, and when we harvest I will direct the reapers to gather up the weeds first and tie them up in bundles to burn, but get the wheat into my barn.’”

Another figure which he used in speaking to them was this:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the largest of plants and grows into a tree, so that the wild birds come and roost in its branches.”

Another figure which he used with them was this:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and buried in a bushel of flour until it had all risen.

* * * * *

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a hoard of money, buried in a field, which a man found, and buried again. And he was overjoyed, and went and sold everything he had and bought the field.

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a dealer in search

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of fine pearls. He found one costly pearl, and went and sold everything he had, and bought it.

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a net that was let down into the sea, and inclosed fish of all kinds. When it was full, they dragged it up on the beach, and sat down and sorted the good fish into baskets and threw the bad away. That is what will happen at the close of the age. The angels will go out and remove the wicked from among the upright, and throw them into the blazing furnace. There they will wail and grind their teeth.

“Do you understand all this?”

They said to him,

“Yes.”

He said to them,

“Then remember that every scribe who has become a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven must be like a householder who can supply from his storeroom new things as well as old.”



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Jesus was not only a teacher. He went about doing good. He constantly helped people who were in trouble. He did not hide himself in the wild country and wait for people to come to him, as John had done, but went around among the towns and villages, preaching, curing the sick, and driving out the demons, by which they believed people who had certain kinds of diseases were possessed. He gathered a little band of disciples, who traveled with him; he called them his apostles, or messengers. Occasionally he returned to Capernaum, which was his home.

AFTER JOHN WAS ARRESTED, Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news from God, saying, "The time has come and the reign of God is near; repent, and believe this good news."

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As he was passing along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets in the sea, for they were fishermen. Jesus said to them,

“Come, follow me, and I will make you fish for men.”

They immediately abandoned their nets and followed him. He went on a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; they too were in their boat putting their nets in order. He immediately called them. And they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and went off after him.

They proceeded to Capernaum, and on the very first Sabbath he went to the synagogue and taught. And they were amazed at his teaching, for he taught them like one who had authority, and not like the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man under the control of a foul spirit, and he cried out,

“What do you want of us, Jesus, you Nazarene? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, you are God’s holy One!”

Jesus reproved him, and said,

“Silence! Get out of him!”

The foul spirit convulsed the man and gave a loud cry and went out of him. And they were all so amazed that they discussed it with one another, and said,

“What does this mean? It is a new teaching! He gives orders with authority even to the foul spirits, and they obey him!”

And his fame immediately spread in all directions through the whole neighborhood of Galilee.

As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the house of Simon and Andrew. Simon’s mother-

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in-law was in bed, sick with a fever, and they immediately told him about her. And he went up to her, and grasping her hand, he made her rise. And the fever left her, and she waited on them.

In the evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed by demons, and the whole town was gathered at the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and drove out many demons, and he would not let the demons speak, because they knew that he was Christ.

Early in the morning, long before daylight, he got up and left the house and went off to a lonely spot, and prayed there. And Simon and his companions sought him out and found him, and said to him,

“They are all looking for you!”

He said to them,

“Let us go somewhere else, to the neighboring country towns, so that I may preach in them, too, for that is why I came out here.”

So he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out the demons.

There came to him a leper appealing to him on his knees, saying to him,

“If you only choose, you can cure me.”

And he pitied him and stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him,

“I do choose! Be cured!”

And the leprosy immediately left him, and he was cured. And Jesus immediately drove him away with stern injunctions, saying to him,

“See that you say nothing about this to anybody, but begone!

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show yourself to the priest, and in proof of your cure make the offerings for your purification which Moses prescribed."

But he went off and began to talk so much about it, and to spread the story so widely, that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in unfrequented places, and people came to him from every direction.

Some days later he came back to Capernaum, and people heard that he was at home, and such a crowd gathered that after a while there was no room even around the door, and he was telling them his message. And some people came bringing to him a man who was paralyzed, four of them carrying him. As they could not get him near Jesus on account of the crowd, they broke open the roof just over his head, and through the opening they lowered the mat with the paralytic lying on it. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic,

"My son, your sins are forgiven."

There were some scribes sitting there pondering and saying to themselves,

"Why does this man talk so? This is blasphemy. Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus, at once perceiving by his spirit that they were pondering over this, said to them,

"Why do you ponder over this in your minds? Which is easier, to say to this paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say to him, 'Get up and pick up your mat and walk'? But to let you know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth," turning to the paralytic he said, "I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

And he got up, and immediately picked up his mat and went

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out before them all, so that they were all astonished and acknowledged the power of God, saying,

“We never saw anything like this before.”

He went out of the town again and along the shore, and all the people came to him and he taught them. And as he was passing along he saw Levi, the son of Alpheus, sitting at the tollhouse, and he said to him,

“Follow me.”

And he got up and followed him.

He was at table in his house, with many tax-collectors and irreligious people who were at table with him and his disciples, for there were many of them among his followers. And when the scribes who were of the Pharisees' party saw that he was eating with irreligious people and tax-collectors, they said to his disciples,

“Why does he eat with tax-collectors and irreligious people?”

Jesus heard it, and said to them,

“It is not well people but the sick who have to have the doctor. I did not come to invite the pious but the irreligious.”

Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were keeping a fast. And people came and asked him,

“Why is it that when John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are keeping the fast, yours are not keeping it?”

Jesus said to them,

“Can wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But a time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and when that day comes, they will fast. No one sews a patch of unshrunken cloth on an old coat; or if he

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does, the patch tears away, the new from the old, and makes the hole worse than ever. And no one pours new wine into old wine-skins; or if he does, the wine bursts the skins, and the wine is lost, and the skins too. New wine has to be put into fresh skins."

He happened to be passing through the wheat fields on the Sabbath, and his disciples began to pick the heads of wheat as they made their way through. And the Pharisees said to him,

"Look! Why are they doing what it is against the law to do on the Sabbath?"

He said to them,

"Did you never read what David did, when he was in need and hungry, he and his men? How is it that he went into the house of God when Abiathar¹ was high priest, and ate the Presentation Loaves, which it is against the law for anyone but the priests to eat, and gave some to his companions too?"

And he said to them,

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, and so the Son of Man is master even of the Sabbath."

He went again to a synagogue, and there was a man there with one hand withered. And they were watching him closely, to see whether he would cure him on the Sabbath, in order to get a charge to bring against him. He said to the man with the withered hand,

"Get up and come forward."

And he said to them,

"Is it allowable to do people good on the Sabbath, or to do them harm? To save life or kill?" But they made no answer. And he looked around at them with anger, hurt by their obstinacy, and he said to the man,

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“Hold out your hand!”

And he held it out, and his hand was cured. Then the Pharisees left the synagogue and immediately consulted with the Herodians about Jesus, with a view to putting him to death.

So Jesus retired with his disciples to the seashore, and a great many people from Galilee followed him, and from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from the other side of the Jordan and from the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon a great many who had heard of the things he was doing came to him. He told his disciples to have a boat always ready for his use, to prevent his being crushed by the crowd. For he cured so many people that all who had any ailments pressed up to him to touch him. And whenever the foul spirits saw him, they fell down before him and screamed out,

“You are the Son of God!” And he warned them repeatedly not to tell who he was.

And he went up the hillside and summoned to him those whom he wanted, and they went to him. He appointed twelve of them, whom he called apostles, to be with him and to be sent out to preach, with power to drive out the demons. These were the twelve he appointed: Peter, which was the name he gave to Simon, James the son of Zebedee, and John, James's brother (he named them Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Then he went home. And again the crowd gathered in such numbers that there was no chance for them even to have their meals. His relatives heard of it and came over to stop him, for they said that he was out of his mind. And the scribes who had

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come down from Jerusalem said that he was possessed by Beelzebub and drove out demons by the help of the prince of demons. So he called them to him and spoke to them in figures, saying,

“How can Satan drive Satan out? If a kingdom is disunited, that kingdom cannot last. And if a household is disunited, that household cannot last. And if Satan has rebelled against himself and become disunited, he cannot last but is coming to his end. But no one can go into a strong man’s house and carry off his property unless he first binds the strong man; after that he can plunder his house. I tell you, men will be forgiven for everything, for all their sins and all the abusive things they say. But whoever reviles the holy Spirit can never be forgiven, but is guilty of an unending sin.”

This was because they said, “He is possessed by a foul spirit.”

And his mother and his brothers came. And they stood outside the house and sent word in to him to come outside to them. There was a crowd sitting around him when they told him,

“Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you.”

He answered,

“Who are my mother and my brothers?”

And looking around at the people sitting about him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

Then he began again to teach by the seashore. And a crowd gathered around him so great that he got into a boat and sat in it, a little way from the shore, while all the people were on the land close to the water. He taught them many lessons in figures, and said to them in the course of his teaching,

“Listen: A sower went out to sow, and as he was sowing,

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some of the seed chanced to fall by the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some of it fell on rocky ground, and where there was not much soil, and it sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, but when the sun came up, it was scorched, and withered up, because it had no root. Some of the seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it out, and it yielded no grain. And some fell on good soil, and came up and grew and yielded thirty, sixty, even a hundredfold."

And he said,

"Let him who has ears be sure to listen!"

When he was by himself, those who stayed about him with the Twelve asked him about the figures he had used. And he said to them,

"To you has been intrusted the secret of the reign of God, but to those outsiders everything is offered in figures, so that

"They may look and look and yet not see,

And listen and listen and yet not understand,

Lest possibly they should turn and be forgiven.'"

And Jesus said,

"If you do not understand this figure, then how will you understand my other figures? What the sower sows is the message. The ones by the path are those into whose hearts the message falls, and as soon as they hear it Satan comes and carries off the message that has been sown in their hearts. It is so too with the ones sown on the rocky ground; they gladly accept the message as soon as they hear it, but it takes no real root in them and they last only a little while; then when trouble or persecution comes because of the message they give it up at once. It is different with those sown among the thorns. They are people who listen to the message, but the worries of

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the time and the pleasure of being rich and passions for other things creep in and choke the message out and it yields nothing. And the ones sown in good ground are the people who listen to the message and welcome it and yield thirty, sixty, even a hundredfold.

“Do people get out the lamp,” he said to them, “and then put it under the peck-measure, or under the bed, instead of putting it up where it belongs? For no one hides anything except for the purpose of sometime bringing it to light again, and people keep things secret only to reveal them some day. If any-one has ears let him be sure to listen.

“Take care what you hear,” he said to them. “The measure you give will be given to you, and even more besides. For peo-
ple who have will have more given them, and from people who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.

“The reign of God,” he said, “is like a man scattering seed on the ground, and then sleeping at night and getting up by day, while the seed sprouts and comes up, without his knowing it. The ground of itself is productive, putting forth first a blade, then a head, then fully developed wheat in the head. But as soon as the crop will let him, the man goes in with his sickle, for the harvest time has come.

“How can we find any comparison,” he said, “for the reign of God, or what figure can we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown in the ground, though it is the smallest of all the seeds in the world, yet once sown, comes up and grows to be the largest of all the plants, and produces branches so large that the wild birds can roost under the shelter of it.”

With many such figures he told them the message, as far as

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they were able to receive it. He said nothing to them except in figures, but in private he explained everything to his own disciples.

That same day when it was evening he said to them,
"Let us cross to the other side."

So they left the crowd and took him away in the boat in which he was sitting. There were other boats with him. And a heavy squall of wind came on and the waves dashed into the boat, so that it was beginning to fill. He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him up and said to him,

"Master, does it make no difference to you that we are sinking?"

Then he awoke and reproved the wind, and said to the sea,

"Hush! Silence!"

And the wind went down and there was a great calm. And he said to them,

"Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"

And they were very much frightened, and said to one another,

"Who can he be? For even the wind and the sea obey him."

So they reached the other side of the sea, and landed in the region of Gerasa. As soon as he got out of the boat, a man possessed by a foul spirit came out of the burial places near by to meet him. This man lived among the tombs, and no one could any longer secure him even with a chain, for he had often been fastened with fetters and chains and had snapped the chains and broken the fetters; and there was no one strong enough to master him, and night and day he was always shrieking among the tombs and on the hills and cutting himself with

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stones. And catching sight of Jesus in the distance he ran up and made obeisance to him and screamed out,

“What do you want of me, Jesus, son of the Most High God? In God’s name, I implore you, do not torture me.” For he was saying to him,

“You foul spirit, come out of this man.”

He asked him,

“What is your name?”

He said,

“My name is Legion, for there are many of us.”

And they begged him earnestly not to send them out of that country.

Now there was a great drove of pigs feeding there on the hillside. And they implored him,

“Send us among the pigs, let us go into them.”

So he gave them permission. And the foul spirits came out and went into the pigs, and the drove of about two thousand rushed over the steep bank into the sea and were drowned. And the men who tended them ran away and spread the news in the town and in the country around, and the people came to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus and found the demoniac sitting quietly with his clothes on and in his right mind—the same man who had been possessed by Legion—they were frightened. And those who had seen it told them what had happened to the demoniac, and all about the pigs. And they began to beg him to leave their district. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed begged to be allowed to go with him. And he would not permit it, but said to him,

“Go home to your own people, and tell them all the Lord

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has done for you and how he took pity on you.” And he went off and began to tell everybody in the Ten Towns all Jesus had done for him; and they were all astonished.

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him as he stood on the shore. And a man named Jairus, the leader of a synagogue, came up and seeing him threw himself at his feet and appealed to him, saying,

“My little daughter is at the point of death. Come, lay your hands on her, so that she may get well and live!”

So he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and pressed around him. And a woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had had a great deal of treatment from various doctors and had spent all that she had and had not been benefited at all but had actually grown worse, had heard about Jesus. And she came up in the crowd behind him and touched his coat, for she said,

“If I can only touch his clothes, I shall get well.”

The hemorrhage stopped at once, and she felt in her body that she was cured. Jesus instantly perceived that healing power had passed from him, and he turned around in the crowd and said,

“Who touched my clothes?”

His disciples said to him,

“You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”

But he still looked around to see the person who had done it. The woman, knowing what had happened to her, came forward frightened and trembling, and threw herself down at his feet and told him the whole truth. And he said to her,

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“My daughter, it is your faith that has cured you. Go in peace and be free from your disease.”

Even as he spoke people came from the house of the leader of the synagogue and said,

“Your daughter is dead. Why should you trouble the Master any further?”

But Jesus paid no attention to what they said, but said to the leader of the synagogue,

“Do not be afraid, just have faith.”

He let no one go with him but Peter, James, and James's brother John. They came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, and there he found everything in confusion, and people weeping and wailing. And he went into the house and said to them,

“What is the meaning of all this confusion and crying? The child is not dead, she is asleep.” And they laughed at him. But he drove them all out, and took the child's father and mother and the men who were with him and went into the room where the child was lying. And he grasped her hand and said to her,

“Taleitha, koum!”—that is to say, “Little girl, I tell you, get up!”

And the little girl immediately got up and walked about, for she was twelve years old. The moment they saw it they were utterly amazed. And he strictly forbade them to let anyone know of it, and told them to give her something to eat.

Leaving there he went, followed by his disciples, to his own part of the country. When the Sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue. And the people were astonished when they heard him, and said,

“Where did he get all this? How does he come to have such

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wisdom? How are such marvelous things done through him? Is he not the carpenter, Mary's son, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And do not his sisters live here among us?"

And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them,

"A prophet is treated with honor everywhere except in his native place and among his relatives and at his home."

He could not do any wonder there, except that he put his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he wondered at their want of faith.

Then he went around among the villages teaching. And he called the Twelve to him and sent them off two by two, giving them power over the foul spirits. He forbade them to take anything for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no small change even in their girdles; they were to go in sandals, and not to wear two shirts. And he said to them,

"Whenever you go to stay at a house, remain in it till you leave that place. If any place refuses to receive you or to listen to you, when you leave it shake off the very dust from the soles of your feet as a warning to them."

So they went out and preached that men should repent, and drove out many demons, and cured many sick people by anointing them with oil.

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In those days when a great crowd had gathered again and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them,

"I pity these people, for they have been staying with me three days now, and they have nothing left to eat. And if I send

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them home hungry they will give out on the way, for some of them come from a distance."

His disciples replied,

"Where can anyone get bread enough, here in this solitude, to satisfy these people's hunger?"

"How many loaves have you?" he asked.

"Seven," they said.

Then he ordered the people to take their places on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and gave thanks and broke them in pieces and gave them to his disciples to pass, and they passed them to the people. They had a few small fish, and he blessed them and told the disciples to pass them also to the people. And they ate and satisfied their hunger. And the pieces that they left, that were picked up, filled seven baskets. There were about four thousand of the people. And he dismissed them. Then he immediately got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

The Pharisees came out and began a discussion with him, testing him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. And he sighed deeply and said,

"Why do the men of this day ask for a sign? I tell you, no sign will be given them."

And he left them and got into the boat again and crossed to the other side.

* * * * *

Then Jesus and his disciples went away to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he questioned his disciples and said to them,

"Who do people say that I am?"

STORIES OF JESUS' WORK IN GALILEE

They said to him,

“John the Baptist; others say Elijah, and others that you are one of the prophets.”

And he asked them,

“But who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered and said to him,

“You are the Christ.”

And he warned them not to say this about him to anyone.

Then he explained to them for the first time that the Son of Man must go through much suffering, and be refused by the elders and the high priests and the scribes, and be killed, and rise again three days after. He told them this plainly. And Peter took him aside, and began to reprove him for it. But turning and seeing his disciples he reproved Peter, and said,

“Get out of my sight, you Satan! for you do not side with God, but with men.”

And he called the people and his disciples to him and said to them,

“If anyone wants to go with me, he must disregard himself, and take his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to preserve his own life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for me and for the good news will preserve it. For what good does it do a man to gain the whole world and yet part with his life? For what can a man give to buy back his life? For if anyone is ashamed of me and my teaching in this unfaithful and sinful age, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of him, when he comes back in his Father's glory, with the holy angels.” And he said to them, “I tell you, some of you who stand here will certainly live to see the reign of God come in its might.”

Six days after this Jesus took Peter, James, and John with

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him, and led them up on a high mountain, off by themselves. And his appearance underwent a change in their presence, and his clothes shone whiter than any earthly bleaching could make them. And Elijah appeared to them, accompanied by Moses, and they talked with Jesus. Then Peter spoke, and said to Jesus,

“Master, how good it is that we are here! Let us put up three huts, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” For he did not know what to say, they were so frightened. And a cloud came and overshadowed them, and from the cloud came a voice,

“This is my Son, my Beloved. Listen to him.”

And suddenly, on looking around, they saw that there was now no one with them but Jesus alone. As they were going down the mountain, he cautioned them to let no one know what they had seen, until the Son of Man should rise from the dead. And they did not forget what he said, but discussed with one another what he meant by the rising from the dead. And they asked him,

“Why do the scribes say that Elijah has to come first?”

He said to them,

“Elijah does come first, and reforms everything, and does not the Scripture say of the Son of Man that he will suffer much and be refused? Why, I tell you, not only has Elijah come, but people have treated him just as they pleased, as the Scripture says about him.”

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And they reached Capernaum. When he reached home, he asked them,

STORIES OF JESUS' WORK IN GALILEE

“What was it that you were discussing on the way?”

But they made no answer, for on the way they had been discussing with one another which of them was the greatest. And he sat down and called the Twelve in, and said to them,

“If anyone wishes to be first, he must be the last of all and the servant of all.”

And he took a child and made him stand among them, and he put his arms around him, and said to them,

“Whoever welcomes one child like this on my account is welcoming me, and whoever welcomes me, welcomes not me but him who has sent me.”



SOME OF JESUS' STORIES

As Jesus went about Galilee, people sometimes asked him questions or disputed what he said. He would answer them by telling a story. In this way he came to tell them what we call the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, which still have a meaning for us all.

THEN AN EXPERT IN THE LAW got up to test him and said, "Master, what must I do to make sure of eternal life?"

Jesus said to him,

"What does the Law say? How does it read?"

He answered,

"You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole strength, and your whole mind, and 'your neighbor as you do yourself.' "

Jesus said to him,

SOME OF JESUS' STORIES

“You are right. Do that, and you will live.”

But he, wishing to justify his question, said,

“And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied,

“A man was on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers, and they stripped him and beat him and went off leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be going that way, and when he saw him, he went by on the other side of the road. And a Levite also came to the place, and when he saw him, he went by on the other side. But a Samaritan who was traveling that way came upon him, and when he saw him he pitied him, and he went up to him and dressed his wounds with oil and wine and bound them up. And he put him on his own mule and brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out a dollar and gave it to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend I will refund to you on my way back.’ Which of these three do you think proved himself a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?”

He said,

“The man who took pity on him.”

Jesus said to him,

“Go and do so yourself!”

* * * * *

All the tax-collectors and irreligious people were crowding up to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes grumbled, and said,

“This man welcomes irreligious people, and even eats with them!”

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So in speaking to them he used this figure:

“What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep, and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go in search of the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he finds it, he puts it on his shoulders with joy, and when he reaches home, he calls in his friends and neighbors, and says to them, ‘Congratulate me, for I have found my lost sheep!’ I tell you, in just that way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinful person who repents, than over ninety-nine upright people who do not need any repentance. Or what woman who has ten silver coins and loses one, does not light the lamp and sweep the house and look carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls in her friends and neighbors, and says to them, ‘Congratulate me, for I have found the coin that I lost!’ In just that way, I tell you, there is joy among the angels of God over one sinful person who repents!”

And he said,

“A man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the property.’ So he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered up all he had, and went away to a distant country, and there he squandered his property by fast living. After he had spent it all, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and hired himself out to a resident of the country, and he sent him into his fields to tend pigs. And he was ready to fill himself with the pods the pigs were eating, and no one would give him anything. When he came to himself he said, ‘How many hired men my father has, who have more than enough to eat, and here I am, dying of hunger! I will get up, and go to my father, and say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in

SOME OF JESUS' STORIES

your eyes; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired men!"' And he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and pitied him, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your eyes; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired men!' But his father said to his slaves, 'Make haste and get out the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and get the calf we are fattening, and kill it, and let us feast and celebrate, for my son here was dead, and he has come to life; he was lost, and he is found!' So they began to celebrate.

"But his elder son was in the field. When he came in and approached the house, he heard music and dancing, and he called one of the servants to him and asked him what it meant. He said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the calf he has been fattening, because he has gotten him back alive and well.' But he was angry, and would not go into the house. And his father came out and urged him. And he said to his father, 'Here I have served you all these years, and have never disobeyed an order of yours, and you have never given me a kid, so that I could entertain my friends. But when your son here came, who has eaten up your property with women of the streets, for him you killed the calf you have been fattening!' But he said to him, 'My child, you have been with me all the time, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because your brother was dead, and has come to life, and was lost and is found!'"



“There was once a rich man, who used to dress in purple and fine linen, and to live in luxury every day. And a beggar named Lazarus was put down at his gate covered with sores and eager to satisfy his hunger with what was thrown away from the rich man’s table. Why, the very dogs came and licked his sores. And it came about that the beggar died and was carried away by the angels to the companionship of Abraham, and the rich man too died and was buried. And in Hades he looked up, tormented as he was, and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus beside him. And he called to him and said, ‘Father Abraham! take pity on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in torment, here in the flames!’ And Abraham said, ‘My child, remember that you received your blessings in your lifetime, and Lazarus had his misfortunes in his; and now he is being comforted here, while you are in anguish. Besides there is a great chasm set between you and us, so that those who want to go over from this side to you cannot, and they cannot cross from your side to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers; let him warn them so that they will not also come to this place of torture.’ Abraham answered, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them listen to them.’ But he said, ‘No! Father Abraham, but if someone will go to them from the dead, they will repent!’ He answered, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead!’ ”

* * * * *

To some who were confident of their own uprightness, and thought nothing of others, he used this illustration:

SOME OF JESUS' STORIES

"Two men went up to the Temple to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee stood up and uttered this prayer to himself: 'O God, I thank you that I am not like other men, greedy, dishonest, or adulterous, like that tax-collector. I fast two days in the week; I pay tithes on everything I get.' But the tax-collector stood at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven, but struck his breast, and said, 'O God, have mercy on a sinner like me!' I tell you, it was he who went back to his house with God's approval, and not the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted."



JESUS GOES UP TO JERUSALEM

Jesus had been opposed and threatened again and again as he preached in Galilee. But he resolved to go up to Jerusalem for the great Passover festival, when the city would be crowded with pious Jews from everywhere, and to offer his message there publicly, to the whole Jewish people, in a way that would never be forgotten. He made a triumphal entry into the city, and the throngs coming to the festival welcomed him with cheers. It is this occasion that we still celebrate as Palm Sunday. But he offended the priests by clearing the Temple of shops and business places and they opposed him and contradicted his teaching.

AND PEOPLE BROUGHT CHILDREN TO HIM to have him touch them, but the disciples reproved them for it. When Jesus saw it, he was indignant, and said to them,

“Let the children come to me; do not try to stop them, for

JESUS GOES UP TO JERUSALEM

the Kingdom of God belongs to such as they. I tell you, whoever does not accept the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all."

And he took the children in his arms and laid his hands on them and blessed them.

As he was starting again on his journey, a man came running up to him, and knelt at his feet and asked him,

"Good master, what must I do to make sure of eternal life?"

But Jesus said to him,

"Why do you call me good? No one is good but God himself. You know the commandments—'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'"

But he said to him,

"Master, I have obeyed all these commandments ever since I was a child."

And Jesus looked at him and loved him, and he said to him,

"There is one thing that you lack. Go, sell all you have, and give the money to the poor, and then you will have riches in heaven; and come back and be a follower of mine."

But his face fell at Jesus' words, and he went away much cast down, for he had a great deal of property.

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,

"How hard it will be for those who have money to enter the Kingdom of God!"

But the disciples were amazed at what he said. And Jesus said to them again,

"My children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into the Kingdom of God!"

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They were perfectly astounded and said to him,
"Then who can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said,

"For men it is impossible, but not for God, for anything is possible for God."

Peter started to say to him,

"Well, we have left all we had, and have followed you."

Jesus said,

"I tell you, there is no one who has given up home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or land for me and for the good news, but will receive now in this life a hundred times as much in homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and lands, though not without persecution—and in the coming age eternal life. But many who are first now will be last then, and the last will be first."

As they went on their way up to Jerusalem, Jesus walked ahead of them, and they were in dismay, and those who still followed were afraid. And he took the Twelve aside again and began to tell them what was going to happen to him.

"See!" he said, "we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the high priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the heathen and they will ridicule him and spit on him and flog him and kill him; and three days after he will rise again."

And Zebedee's two sons, James and John, came up to him and said,

"Master, we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

He said to them,

"What do you want me to do for you?"

They said to him,

JESUS GOES UP TO JERUSALEM

“Let us sit one at your right hand and one at your left, in your triumph.”

Jesus said to them,

“You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink what I am drinking, or undergo the baptism that I am undergoing?”

They said to him,

“Yes, we can.”

Jesus said to them,

“Then you shall drink what I am drinking, and you shall undergo the baptism that I am undergoing; but as for sitting at my right or at my left, that is not mine to give, but belongs to those for whom it is destined.”

When the other ten heard of this they were at first very indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him, and said to them,

“You know that those who are supposed to rule the heathen lord it over them, and their great men tyrannize over them; but it is not to be so among you. Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to hold the first place among you must be everybody’s slave. For the Son of Man himself has not come to be waited on, but to wait on other people, and to give his life to free many others.”

And they came to Jericho. As he was leaving the town with his disciples and a great crowd, Timaeus’ son Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting at the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth he began to cry out,

“Jesus, you son of David, take pity on me!”

Many of the people rebuked him and told him to be still. But he cried out all the louder,

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“You son of David, take pity on me!”

Jesus stopped and said,

“Call him here.”

And they called the blind man and said to him,

“Courage now! Get up, he is calling you!”

And he threw off his coat and sprang to his feet and went up to Jesus. Jesus spoke to him and said,

“What do you want me to do for you?”

The blind man said to him,

“Master, let me regain my sight!”

Jesus said to him,

“Go your way. Your faith has cured you.”

And he immediately regained his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

When they were getting near Jerusalem, and had come to Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples on ahead, and said to them,

“Go to the village that lies in front of you, and as soon as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. And if anybody says to you, ‘Why are you doing that?’ say, ‘The Master needs it, and will send it back here directly.’”

And they set off and found a colt tied in the street at the door of a house, and they untied it. Some of the bystanders said to them,

“What are you doing, untying the colt?”

But they answered them as Jesus had told them to do, and the men let them take it. So they brought the colt to Jesus, and they threw their coats over it and Jesus mounted it. And

JESUS GOES UP TO JERUSALEM

many of the people spread their coats in the road, and others cut straw from the fields and scattered it in his path. And those in front and those behind shouted,

“God bless him!

Blessed be he who comes in the Lord’s name!

Blessed be the reign of our father David which is coming!

God bless him from on high!”

And he came into Jerusalem and into the Temple, and looked it all over; then, as it was already late, he went out with the Twelve to Bethany.

On the next day, after they had left Bethany, he felt hungry. And he saw in the distance a fig tree covered with leaves, and he went up to it to see if he could find any figs on it. When he reached it he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the time for figs. And he spoke to the tree and said to it,

“May no one ever eat fruit from you any more!”

And his disciples heard it.

When they reached Jerusalem, he went into the Temple, and began to drive out of it those who were buying or selling things in it, and he upset the money-changers’ tables and the pigeon-dealers’ seats, and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the Temple. And he taught them, and said,

“Does not the Scripture say, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a robbers’ cave.”

The high priests and the scribes heard of this, and they cast about for a way of destroying him, for they were afraid of him, for all the people were amazed at what he taught. So when evening came, he and his disciples used to go out of the city.

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In the morning as they were passing along, they saw that the fig tree was withered, to its very roots. And Peter remembered about it and said to him,

“Look, Master! The fig tree that you cursed is withered up!”

Jesus answered and said to them,

“Have faith in God! I tell you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Get up and throw yourself into the sea!’ and has no doubt in his mind, but has faith that what he says will happen, shall have it. Therefore I tell you, whenever you pray or ask for anything, have faith that it has been granted you, and you shall have it. And whenever you stand up to pray, if you have a grievance against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven too may forgive you your offenses.”

Then they went into Jerusalem again. And as Jesus was walking about in the Temple, the high priests, scribes, and elders came up and said to him,

“What authority have you for doing as you do? And who gave you a right to do as you are doing?”

Jesus said to them,

“Let me ask you one question, and if you answer me, I will tell you what authority I have for doing as I do. Was John’s baptism from heaven or from men? Answer me.”

And they argued with one another,

“If we say, ‘It was from heaven,’ he will say, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’ Yet can we say, ‘It was from men?’” For they were afraid of the people, because all the people thought John was really a prophet. So they answered Jesus,

“We do not know.”

Jesus said to them,

JESUS GOES UP TO JERUSALEM

“Nor will I tell you what authority I have for doing as I do.”

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They sent some Pharisees and Herodians to him to entrap him in argument. And they came up and said to him,

“Master, we know that you tell the truth regardless of the consequences, for you are not guided by personal considerations, but teach the way of God with sincerity. Is it right to pay the poll tax to the emperor or not? Should we pay it, or refuse to pay it?”

But he saw through their pretense, and said to them,

“Why do you put me to such a test? Bring me a denarius to look at.”

And they brought him one. He said to them,
“Whose head and title is this?”

And they told him,
“The emperor’s.”

And Jesus said,
“Pay the emperor what belongs to the emperor, and pay God what belongs to God!”

And they were astonished at him.

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One of the scribes came up and heard them arguing. He saw that Jesus had answered them well, and he asked him,

“Which is the first of all the commands?”

Jesus answered,

“The first one is, ‘Hear, Israel! The Lord our God is one lord, and you must love the Lord your God with your whole

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heart, your whole soul, your whole mind, and your whole strength.' And this is the second: 'You must love your neighbor as you do yourself.' No other command is greater than these."

The scribe said to him,

"Really, Master, you have finely said that he stands alone, and there is none but he, and to love him with one's whole heart, one's whole understanding, and one's whole strength, and to love one's neighbor as one's self is far more than all these burnt-offerings and sacrifices."

And Jesus saw that he answered thoughtfully, and he said to him,

"You are not far from the Kingdom of God!"

And no one ventured to ask him any more questions.

* * * * *

And he sat down facing the treasury and watched the people dropping money into it; and many rich people were putting in large sums. A poor widow came up and dropped in two little copper coins which make a cent. And he called his disciples to him and said,

"I tell you that this poor widow has put in more than all these others who have been putting money into the treasury. For they all gave of what they had to spare, but she in her want has put in everything she possessed—all she had to live on."

As he was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples said to him,

"Look, Master! What wonderful stones and buildings!"

Jesus said to him,

"Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be torn down."



THE BRIDESMAIDS, THE TALENTS AND THE JUDGMENT

At Jerusalem Jesus told three of his greatest stories, or parables, the Bridesmaids, the Talents and the Last Judgment. They are like three great pictures, full of meaning for the only kind of life Jesus thought worth while.

THEN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were foolish and five were sensible. For the foolish ones brought their lamps but brought no oil with them, but the sensible ones with their lamps brought oil in their flasks. As the bridegroom was slow in coming, they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But in the middle of the night there was a shout 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out and meet him!' Then all the bridesmaids awoke, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, 'Give us

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some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the sensible ones answered, 'There may not be enough for us and you. You had better go to the dealers and buy yourselves some.' But while they were gone to buy it, the bridegroom arrived, and the ones that were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was closed. Afterward the other bridesmaids came and said, 'Sir! Sir! Open the door for us!' But he answered, 'I tell you, I do not know you!' So you must be on the watch, for you do not know either the day or the hour.

"For it is just like a man who was going on a journey, and called in his slaves, and put his property in their hands. He gave one five thousand dollars, and another two thousand, and another one thousand; to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The man who had received the five thousand dollars immediately went into business with the money, and made five thousand more. In the same way the man who had received the two thousand made two thousand more. But the man who had received the one thousand went away and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Long afterward, their master came back and settled accounts with them. And the man who had received the five thousand dollars came up bringing him five thousand more, and said, 'Sir, you put five thousand dollars in my hands; here I have made five thousand more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my excellent, faithful slave! you have been faithful about a small amount; I will put a large one into your hands. Come, share your master's enjoyment!' And the man who had received the two thousand came up and said, 'Sir, you put two thousand dollars into my hands; here I have made two thousand more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my excellent, faithful

THE BRIDESMAIDS, TALENTS AND JUDGMENT

slave! you have been faithful about a small amount; I will put a large one into your hands. Come, share your master's enjoyment!' And the man who had received the one thousand came up and said, 'Sir, I knew you were a hard man, who reaped where you had not sown, and gathered where you had not threshed, and I was frightened, and I went and hid your thousand dollars in the ground. Here is your money!' His master answered, 'You wicked, idle slave! You knew that I reaped where I had not sown and gathered where I had not threshed? Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and then when I came back I would have gotten my property with interest. So take the thousand dollars away from him, and give it to the man who has the ten thousand, for the man who has will have more given him, and will be plentifully supplied, and from the man who has nothing even what he has will be taken away. And put the good-for-nothing slave out into the darkness outside, to weep and grind his teeth there.'

"When the Son of Man comes in his splendor, with all his angels with him, he will take his seat on his glorious throne, and all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them from one another, just as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. Then the king will say to those at his right, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take possession of the kingdom which has been destined for you from the creation of the world. For when I was hungry, you gave me food, when I was thirsty you gave me something to drink, when I was a stranger, you invited me to your homes, when I had no clothes, you gave me clothes, when I was sick, you looked after me, when I was in prison, you came to see me.'

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Then the upright will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty, and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger, and invite you home, or without clothing, and supply you with it? When did we see you sick or in prison, and go to see you?' The king will answer, 'I tell you, in so far as you did it to one of the humblest of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left, 'Begone, you accursed people, to the everlasting fire destined for the devil and his angels! For when I was hungry, you gave me nothing to eat, and when I was thirsty you gave me nothing to drink, when I was a stranger, you did not invite me home, when I had no clothes, you did not supply me, when I was sick and in prison, you did not look after me.' Then they in their turn will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or in need of clothes, or sick, or in prison, and did not wait upon you?' Then he will answer, 'I tell you, in so far as you failed to do it for one of these people who are humblest, you failed to do it for me.' Then they will go away to everlasting punishment, and the upright to everlasting life."



JESUS' TRIAL AND DEATH

Jesus was now in great danger in Jerusalem and he had to make his plans for the Passover supper very secretly. He still hoped to win his people to his teaching. But as he talked with his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, just outside the city, he was arrested in the night, and hurried to trial before the Roman governor Pilate. He was condemned and then crucified. The simple but terrible story is a heroic tragedy.

IT WAS NOW TWO DAYS before the festival of the Passover and of Unleavened Bread. And the high priests and scribes were casting about for a way to arrest him by stealth and put him to death, for they said,

“It must not be during the festival, or there may be a riot.”

* * * * *

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the high

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priests to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear it and promised to pay him for it. So he was watching for an opportunity to betray him to them.

On the first day of the festival of Unleavened Bread, on which it was customary to kill the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples said to him,

“Where do you wish us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover supper?”

So he sent away two of his disciples, saying to them,

“Go into the city, and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and whatever house he goes into, say to the man of the house, ‘The Master says, ‘Where is my room where I can eat the Passover supper with my disciples?’’ And he will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make your preparations for us there.”

So the disciples started and went into the city, and found everything just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover supper.

When it was evening he came with the Twelve. And when they were at the table eating, Jesus said,

“I tell you, one of you is going to betray me—one who is eating with me.”

And they were hurt, and said to him one after another,

“Can it be I?”

He said to them,

“It is one of the Twelve, who is dipping his bread in the same dish with me. For the Son of Man is indeed to go away as the Scriptures say of him, but alas for the man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born.”

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As they were eating, he took a loaf and blessed it, and he broke it in pieces and gave it to them saying,

“Take this. It is my body.”

And he took the wine cup and gave thanks and gave it to them and they all drank from it. And he said to them,

“This is my blood which ratifies the agreement, and is to be poured out for many people. I tell you, I will never drink the product of the vine again till the day when I shall drink the new wine in the Kingdom of God.”

After singing the hymn they went out of the city and up the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them,

“You will all desert me, for the Scriptures say, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ But after I am raised to life again I will go back to Galilee before you.”

But Peter said to him,

“Even if they all desert you, I will not!”

Jesus said to him,

“I tell you, this very night before the cock crows twice you yourself will disown me three times!”

But he persisted vehemently,

“If I have to die with you, I will never disown you.”

And they all said the same thing.

They came to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples,

“Sit down here while I pray.”

And he took Peter, James, and John along with him, and he began to feel distress and dread, and he said to them,

“My heart is almost breaking. You must stay here and keep watch.” And he went on a little way and threw himself on the

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ground and prayed that if it were possible he might be spared the hour of trial; and he said,

“Abba!” that is, Father, “anything is possible for you! Take this cup away from me! Yet not what I please but what you do!”

When he went back he found them asleep and he said to Peter,

“Simon, are you asleep? Were you not able to watch for one hour? You must all watch, and pray that you may not be subjected to trial. One’s spirit is eager, but human nature is weak.”

He went away again and prayed in the same words as before. When he came back he found them asleep again, for they could hardly keep their eyes open; and they did not know what answer to make to him. When he came back for the third time, he said to them,

“Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough of this! The time has come. See! the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of wicked men. Get up, let us be going. Look! here comes my betrayer!”

Just at that moment, while he was still speaking, Judas, who was one of the Twelve, came up, and with him a crowd of men with swords and clubs, from the high priests, scribes, and elders. Now the man who betrayed him had given them a signal, saying,

“The one I kiss is the man. Seize him and take him safely away.”

So when he came he went straight up to Jesus and said, “Master!” and kissed him affectionately.

And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of the

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bystanders drew his sword and struck at the high priest's slave and cut his ear off. And Jesus spoke and said to them,

"Have you come out to arrest me with swords and clubs, as though I were a robber? I have been among you day after day in the Temple teaching, and you never seized me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled!"

Then all the disciples left him and made their escape.

And a young man followed him with nothing but a linen cloth about his body; and they seized him, but he left the cloth behind and ran away naked.

They took Jesus away to the high priest, and all the high priests, elders, and scribes came together. And Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest and sat down with the attendants and warmed himself at the fire. The high priests and the whole council tried to get evidence against Jesus in order to put him to death, and they could find none, for while many gave false testimony against him their evidence did not agree. Some got up and gave false testimony against him to this effect:

"We ourselves have heard him say, 'I will tear down this sanctuary built by men's hands, and in three days I will build another, made without hands.'"

And even then their evidence did not agree. Then the high priest got up and came forward into the center and asked Jesus,

"Have you no answer to make? What about their evidence against you?"

But Jesus was silent and made no answer. The high priest again questioned him and said to him,

"Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?"

But Jesus said,

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“I am! and you will all see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Almighty and coming in the clouds of the sky!”

Then the high priest tore his clothing, and said,

“What do we want of witnesses now? Did you hear his blasphemy? What is your decision?”

And they all condemned him as deserving to be put to death. And some started to spit at him and to blindfold him and strike him, and say to him,

“Now show that you are a prophet!”

And the attendants slapped him as they took charge of him.

While Peter was down in the courtyard, one of the high priest’s maids came up, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said,

“You were with this Jesus of Nazareth too!”

But he denied it, saying,

“I do not know or understand what you mean.”

He went out into the gateway. And the maid saw him there and began again to tell the bystanders,

“This fellow is one of them!”

But he denied it again. And again a little while after, the bystanders said to Peter,

“You certainly are one of them, for you are a Galilean!”

But he began to swear with the strongest oaths,

“I do not know this man that you are talking about!”

At that moment for the second time a cock crowed. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will disown me three times!” And at that, he wept aloud.

As soon as it was daylight, the high priests held a consulta-

JESUS' TRIAL AND DEATH

tion with the elders and scribes, and they and the whole council bound Jesus and took him away and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him,

“Are you the king of the Jews?”

He answered,

“Yes.”

And the high priests kept heaping accusations upon him. But Pilate again asked him,

“Have you no answer to make? See what charges they are making against you.”

But Jesus made no further answer at all, so that Pilate wondered. Now at festival time he used to set free for them one prisoner, whom they petitioned for. There was in prison a man called Barabbas, among some revolutionaries who in their outbreak had committed murder. And a crowd of people came up and started to ask him for the usual favor. Pilate asked them,

“Do you want me to set the king of the Jews free for you?”

For he knew that the high priests had handed him over to him out of envy. But the high priests stirred up the crowd to get him to set Barabbas free for them instead. And Pilate again said to them,

“Then what shall I do with the man you call the king of the Jews?”

They shouted back,

“Crucify him!”

And Pilate said to them,

“Why, what has he done that is wrong?”

But they shouted all the louder,

“Crucify him!”

And as Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd, he set Barabbas

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free for them, and after having Jesus flogged handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers took him inside the courtyard, that is, of the governor's residence, and they called the whole battalion together. And they dressed him up in a purple cloak, and made a wreath of thorns and crowned him with it, and they began to acclaim him,

“Long live the king of the Jews!”

And they struck him on the head with a stick and spat at him, and they knelt down and did homage to him. When they had finished making sport of him, they took off the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him.

Then they took him out of the city to crucify him. And they forced a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross—one Simon, a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus. And they took him to the place called Golgotha, which means the Place of the Skull. They offered him drugged wine, but he would not take it. Then they crucified him, and divided up his clothes, drawing lots for them to see what each of them should have. It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. And the notice of the charge against him read, “The king of the Jews.” They crucified two robbers along with him, one at his right and one at his left. And the passers-by jeered at him, shaking their heads and saying,

“Aha! you who would tear down the sanctuary and build one in three days! Come down from the cross and save yourself!”

The high priests too made sport of him to one another with the scribes and said,

“He saved others, but he cannot save himself! Let this

JESUS' TRIAL AND DEATH

Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see it and believe!" And the men who were crucified with him abused him.

At noon darkness spread over the whole country, and lasted until three in the afternoon. And at three o'clock Jesus called out loudly,

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Some of the bystanders, when they heard it, said:

"See! He is calling for Elijah!"

One man ran off and soaked a sponge in common wine, and put it on the end of a stick and held it up to him to drink, saying,

"Let us see whether Elijah does come to take him down!"

But Jesus gave a loud cry, and expired. And the curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the captain who stood facing him saw how he expired he said,

"This man was certainly a son of God!"

There were some women also watching from a distance, among them Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome, who used to accompany him and wait on him when he was in Galilee—besides many other women who had come up to Jerusalem with him.

Although it was now evening, yet since it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a highly respected member of the council, who was himself living in expectation of the reign of God, made bold to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. Pilate wondered whether he was dead already, and he sent for the captain and asked whether he was dead yet, and when he learned from the cap-

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tain that he was, he gave Joseph permission to take the body. And he bought a linen sheet and took him down from the cross and wrapped him in the sheet, and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the doorway of the tomb. And Mary of Magdala and Mary, Joses' mother, were looking on and saw where he was put.



JESUS' RETURN TO HIS DISCIPLES

The boldness and freedom of Jesus' teaching had aroused such hostility against him that his enemies had brought about his death. But when his closest followers gathered in their old haunts in Galilee to carry on his work, they felt his presence returning. It was as though he had rejoined them. They seemed to see him and hear his voice, telling them to carry his message out into the world and promising to stay with them always—to the very end.

WHEN THE SABBATH WAS OVER, Mary of Magdala, Mary, James's mother, and Salome bought spices, in order to go and anoint him. Then very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb, when the sun had just risen. And they said to one another,

“Who will roll the stone back from the doorway of the tomb for us?”

And they looked up and saw that the stone had been rolled

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back, for it was very large. And when they went into the tomb they saw a young man in a white robe sitting at the right, and they were utterly amazed. But he said to them,

“You must not be amazed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here. See! This is where they laid him. But go and say to his disciples and to Peter, ‘He is going before you to Galilee; you will see him there, just as he told you.’”

And they fled out of the tomb, for they were all trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing about it to anyone, for they were afraid to do so.

* * * * *

And Jesus himself met them, and said,

“Good morning!”

And they went up to him and clasped his feet, and bowed to the ground before him. Jesus said to them,

“You need not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee and they will see me there.”

* * * * *

And the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. There they saw him and bowed down before him, though some were in doubt about it.

And Jesus came up to them and said,

“Full authority in heaven and on the earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all the heathen, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands that I have given you. I will always be with you, to the very close of the age.”



THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Seven weeks after Jesus' death his disciples who were gathered in Jerusalem, had a great experience. They felt his spirit coming over them and giving them new powers, just as he had promised. This made a great stir in Jerusalem, and Peter explained it to the crowd that gathered. He reminded them that Joel had prophesied that some day God would pour out his spirit on mankind and make their sons and daughters prophets.

ON THE DAY OF THE HARVEST FESTIVAL [Pentecost], they were all meeting together, when suddenly there came from the sky a sound like a violent blast of wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And they saw tongues like flames separating and settling one on the head of each of them, and they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to say in foreign languages whatever the Spirit prompted them to utter.

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Now there were devout Jews from every part of the world living in Jerusalem. And when this sound was heard, the crowd gathered in great excitement, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were perfectly amazed and said in their astonishment,

“Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears his own native tongue? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, of Judea and Cappadocia, of Pontus and Asia, of Phrygia and Pamphylia, of Egypt and the district of Africa about Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we all hear them tell in our native tongues the mighty deeds of God.”

And they were all amazed and bewildered and said to one another,

“What can this mean?”

But others said derisively,

“They have had too much new wine!”

Then Peter stood up with the eleven around him, and raising his voice addressed them.

“Men of Judea,” he said, “and all you residents of Jerusalem, let me explain this to you, and pay attention to what I say. These men are not drunk as you suppose, for it is only nine in the morning. But this is what was predicted by the prophet Joel,

“It will come about in the last days, God says,

That I will pour out my Spirit upon all mankind;

Your sons and daughters will become prophets,

Your young men will have visions,

And your old men will have dreams.”

* * * * *

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

“Therefore the whole nation of Israel must understand that God has declared this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.”

When they heard this, they were stung to the heart, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles,

“Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter said to them,

“You must repent, and every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to have your sins forgiven; then you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit, for the promise of it belongs to you and your children, as well as to all those far away whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

He said much more besides in giving his testimony, and urged them to save themselves from that crooked age. So they welcomed his message and were baptized, and about three thousand people joined them that day. And they devoted themselves to the teaching and the society of the apostles, the breaking of bread, and prayer.



THE FIRST MARTYR

The number of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem grew so fast that the apostles soon found that they needed help in their work, so they chose seven men as their assistants or deacons. One of these, named Stephen, was so eloquent and zealous that the Jewish authorities brought him before their council. But there, instead of defending himself, he reproached them and their people for the way they had always treated their great leaders—Joseph, Moses and Jesus. This answer made them so angry that they stoned him to death.

IN THOSE DAYS, AS THE NUMBER of the disciples was increasing, complaints were made by the Greek-speaking Jews against the native Jews that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve called in the whole body of disciples and said to them,

“It is not desirable that we should give up preaching the word

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of God to keep accounts. You, brothers, must pick out from your number seven men of good standing, who are wise and full of the Spirit, and we will put them in charge of this matter, while we devote ourselves to prayer and to delivering the message.”

This plan met the approval of the whole body, and they selected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the holy Spirit, with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, who had been a convert to Judaism. They brought these men before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them.

So God’s message continued to spread; the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a great many priests accepted the faith.

Stephen, greatly strengthened by God’s favor, did remarkable signs and wonders among the people. But members of the synagogue known as that of the Libyans, Cyreneans, and Alexandrians, and men from Cilicia and Asia undertook to debate with Stephen, but they could not meet his wisdom and the inspiration with which he spoke. So they instigated people to say,

“We have heard him use abusive language about Moses and about God.”

They aroused the people, the elders, and the scribes, and they set upon him and seized him, and brought him before the council. Then they brought forward false witnesses, who said,

“This man is constantly saying things against this holy place and against the Law, for we have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth will tear this place down and change the customs that have been handed down to us by Moses.”

Everyone who sat in the council fixed his eyes on him, and

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they saw that his face was like that of an angel. The high priest said,

“Is this statement true?”

He answered,

“Brothers and fathers, listen. The glorious God appeared to our forefather Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran, and he said to him, ‘Leave your country and your relatives and come to the country that I will show you.’ So he left the country of the Chaldeans and went to live in Haran, and from there after the death of his father, God caused him to move into this country where you now live. He gave him no property in it, not a single foot, but he promised to give it to him and his posterity after him permanently, though he had no children at that time. This was what God said: ‘His descendants will be strangers, living in a foreign land, and they will be enslaved and misused for four hundred years, and I will sentence the nation that has enslaved them,’ God said, ‘and afterward they will leave that country and worship me on this spot.’ And he made the agreement of circumcision with him, and so Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs. The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into slavery in Egypt. But God was with him, and rescued him from all his troubles, and enabled him to win favor and to show wisdom when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he appointed him governor of Egypt and of his whole household. Then a famine spread all over Egypt and Canaan, and there was great suffering, and our forefathers could not find any food. But Jacob

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heard that there was food in Egypt, and he sent our forefathers on their first visit there. On their second visit, Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Pharaoh learned of Joseph's parentage. Then Joseph sent and invited his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five in all, and Jacob came down to Egypt. There he and our forefathers died, and they were carried back to Shechem, and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. As the time drew near for the fulfilment of the promise God had made to Abraham, the people became more and more numerous in Egypt, until another king, who knew nothing about Joseph, became ruler of Egypt. He took advantage of our people and oppressed our forefathers, making them abandon their infant children, so that they should not live. It was at this time that Moses was born. He was a wonderfully beautiful child, and for three months he was taken care of in his father's house. When he was abandoned, the daughter of Pharaoh adopted him and brought him up as her own son. So Moses was educated in all the Egyptian culture; he was strong in speech and action. When he was forty years old, it occurred to him to visit his brothers, the descendants of Israel. Seeing one of them being imposed upon, he interfered and defended the man who was being ill treated, striking down the Egyptian. He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was using him as the means of delivering them, but they did not. The next day, he came across two of them fighting and tried to pacify them. He said to them, 'You are brothers. Why should you injure each other?' But the aggressor thrust him off, saying, 'Who made you our ruler and judge? Do you mean to

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kill me as you did that Egyptian yesterday?' At those words Moses fled, and went and lived for a time in Midian, and two sons were born to him there. When forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the desert of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. When Moses saw it he wondered at the sight, and when he went up to see what it was, the voice of the Lord said, 'I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Moses was terrified and did not dare to look at it. Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your shoes, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have seen all the oppression of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their groans, and I have come down to save them. So come! I will make you my messenger to Egypt!' The Moses whom they had refused, saying to him, 'Who made you our ruler and judge?' God sent both to rule and to deliver them, with the help of the angel who had appeared to him in the bush. It was he who brought them out of Egypt, and did wonders and signs there, and at the Red Sea, and for forty years in the desert. This was the Moses who said to the descendants of Israel, 'God will make a prophet rise from among your brothers to teach you, just as he made me rise.' It was he who with the congregation in the desert went between the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai and our forefathers, and received and communicated to you utterances that still live. Yet our forefathers would not listen to him, but thrust him off, and their hearts turned back to Egypt, for they said to Aaron, 'Make us gods to march in front of us, for as for this Moses, who brought us out of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him!' They even made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to their idol, and held a celebration over what their

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own hands had made. So God turned his back on them and left them to worship the starry host, just as the Book of the Prophets says.

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“You stubborn people, with heathen hearts and ears, you are always opposing the holy Spirit, just as your forefathers did! Which of the prophets did your forefathers not persecute? They killed the men who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and killed—you who had the Law given to you by angels, and did not obey it!”

When they heard that, they were enraged and ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw God’s glory and Jesus standing at God’s right hand. And he said,

“Look! I can see heaven open, and the Son of Man standing at God’s right hand!”

But they uttered a great shout and stopped their ears, and they rushed upon him all together, and dragged him out of the city and stoned him, the witnesses throwing down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they stoned Stephen, he prayed,

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”

Then falling on his knees, he cried out,

“Lord, do not lay this sin up against them!”

With these words he fell asleep.



PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

The killing of Stephen was the beginning of an outbreak against the Christians in Jerusalem and all of them who could leave the city did so. Among these was another deacon named Philip. He was going on foot to Gaza when the carriage of a traveler on his way home to Ethiopia came up beside him. He fell into conversation with the traveler and told him about Jesus, and the Ethiopian became a Christian. In this way the gospel of Jesus began to spread to far countries.

BUT AN ANGEL OF THE LORD said to Philip,
"Get up and go south, by the road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza." (The town is now deserted.)

So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a member of the court of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, her chief treasurer, who had come up to Jerusalem to worship, and was on his way home. He was sitting in his car, reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip,

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

“Go up and stay by that car.”

Philip ran up and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and he said to him,

“Do you understand what you are reading?”

“Why, how can I,” he answered, “unless someone explains it to me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. This was the passage of Scripture that he was reading:

“Like a sheep he was led away to be slaughtered,

And just as a lamb is dumb before its shearer,

He does not open his mouth.

His sentence ended in his humiliation.

Who will tell the story of his posterity?

For his life is perished from the earth.”

“Tell me, of whom is the prophet speaking?” said the eunuch to Philip. “Of himself, or of someone else?”

Then Philip began, and starting from this passage, he told him the good news about Jesus. As they went on along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said,

“Here is some water! What is there to prevent my being baptized?”

So he ordered the car to stop, and Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord hurried Philip away, and the eunuch saw nothing more of him. Full of joy, he went on with his journey, while Philip found himself at Ashdod and went on telling the good news in all the towns all the way to Caesarea.



THE CONVERSION OF PAUL

The man who did most to carry the gospel out from Jerusalem and Antioch into the Greek world was Saul, whom we know better by his Roman name of Paul. He was a native of Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, and was educated at Jerusalem to be a rabbi. At first he opposed and persecuted the Christians, but on a journey to Damascus, he had a great experience that changed him completely and made him the greatest Christian of them all.

NOW SAUL, STILL BREATHING murderous threats against the Lord's disciples, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women there who belonged to the Way, he might bring them in chains to Jerusalem. But on his journey, as he was approaching Damascus, a sudden light flashed around him from heaven, and he fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice saying to him,

THE CONVERSION OF PAUL

“Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?”

“Who are you, sir?” he asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” said the voice.
“But get up and go into the city, and there you will be told what you ought to do.”

Saul’s fellow-travelers stood speechless, for they heard the voice but could not see anyone. When he got up from the ground and opened his eyes he could see nothing. They had to take him by the hand and lead him into Damascus, and for three days he could not see, and neither ate nor drank.

There was at Damascus a disciple named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision,

“Ananias!”

And he answered,

“Yes, Lord!”

The Lord said to him,

“Get up and go to the street called the Straight Street, and ask at the house of Judas for a man named Saul, from Tarsus, for he is there praying. He has had a vision and seen a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, to restore his sight.”

But Ananias answered,

“Lord, I have heard many people tell of this man, and the harm he has done to your people in Jerusalem. He is here with authority to arrest everyone who calls upon your name.”

The Lord said to him,

“Go! This man is the means I have chosen for carrying my name among the heathen and their kings, and among the descendants of Israel. For I am going to show him what he will have to endure for my sake.”

Ananias set out and went to the house, and there he laid his hands upon Saul, and said to him,

“Saul, my brother, I have been sent by the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your journey, so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the holy Spirit.”

Something like scales immediately dropped from his eyes, and his sight was restored, and he got up and was baptized, and, after taking some food, regained his strength.

Saul stayed for some time with the disciples at Damascus, and began at once to declare in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God. Everyone was astonished, and said,

“Is not he the man who made such havoc of the people in Jerusalem who call upon that name, and who came here especially for the purpose of arresting such persons and taking them before the high priests?”

But Saul grew more and more powerful, and bewildered the Jews who lived in Damascus by his proofs that Jesus was the Christ.

After some time had passed, the Jews made a plot to kill him, but Saul found out about the plot. They watched the city gates day and night, in order to kill him, but his disciples took him one night and let him down over the wall, lowering him in a basket.

When he reached Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, and they were all afraid of him, for they could not believe that he was really a disciple. But Barnabas got hold of him and introduced him to the apostles, and he told them how on his journey he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him, and how boldly he had spoken for the cause of Jesus at Damascus. After that, he associated with them freely in Jeru-

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salem, and spoke boldly for the Lord's cause, talking and debating with the Greek-speaking Jews. But they tried to kill him. When the brothers found this out, they took him down to Caesarea, and sent him away to Tarsus.



PAUL AT ATHENS

In his efforts to spread the Christian gospel among the Greeks away to the west, Paul traveled through Asia Minor and into Europe, visiting the great flourishing cities of the Greek world. The most famous and beautiful of these was Athens. In the midst of its splendid pagan temples he preached the new gospel of Christ. The Athenians enjoyed anything new, but they listened to him coldly.

BUT WHEN THE JEWS AT THESSALONICA found out that God's message had been delivered at Berea by Paul, they came there too, to excite and stir up the populace. Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off to the coast, while Silas and Timothy stayed behind. The men who went with Paul took him all the way to Athens, and came back with instructions for Silas and Timothy to rejoin him as soon as possible.

While Paul waited for them at Athens, he was exasperated

PAUL AT ATHENS

to see how idolatrous the city was. He had discussions at the synagogue with the Jews and those who worshiped with them, and every day in the public square with any whom he happened to find. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some of them said,

“What is this rag-picker trying to make out?”

Others said,

“He seems to be preaching some foreign deities.”

This was because he was telling the good news of Jesus and the resurrection. So they took him and brought him to the council of the Areopagus and said,

“May we know just what this new teaching of yours is? Some of the things you tell us sound strange to us, and we want to know just what they mean.”

For all Athenians and all visitors there from abroad used to spend all their time telling or listening to something new.

Then Paul stood up in the middle of the council and said,

“Men of Athens, from every point of view I see that you are extremely religious. For as I was going about and looking at the things you worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

“To an Unknown God.”

So it is what you already worship in ignorance that I am now telling you of. God, who created the world and all that is in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples built by human hands, nor is he waited on by human hands as though he were in need of anything, for he himself gives all men life and breath and everything. From one forefather he has created every nation of mankind, and made them live all over the face of the earth, fixing their appointed times and the

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limits of their lands, so that they might search for God, and perhaps grope for him and find him, though he is never far from any of us. For it is through union with him that we live and move and exist, as some of your poets have said,

‘For we are also his offspring.’

So if we are God’s children we ought not to imagine that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, wrought by human art and thought. While God overlooked those times of ignorance, he now calls upon all men everywhere to repent, since he has fixed a day on which he will justly judge the world through a man whom he has appointed, and whom he has guaranteed to all men by raising him from the dead.”

When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said,

“We should like to hear you again on this subject.”

So Paul left the council. Some persons joined him, however, and became believers, among them Dionysius, a member of the council, and a woman named Damaris, and some others.



PAUL MOBBED AND ARRESTED

The Acts is a great book of adventure, full of accounts of travels, voyages, arrests, trials, martyrdoms, plots, escapes and shipwrecks. Most of this action centers about Paul. Starting from Antioch in Syria, he traveled to far-off cities like Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth, gathering little groups of Christians in each place and establishing churches. To many of these he wrote letters, and some of these are preserved in the New Testament. After his journeys to Corinth and Ephesus, he went back to Jerusalem with some money for the needy Christians there. But the city was in such a turbulent state that Paul soon found himself in difficulties. Luke, his doctor, was with him, and he tells the story.

AFTER THIS WE MADE OUR PREPARATIONS and started for Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and took us to the house of Mnason, a man from

Cyprus, one of the early disciples, to spend the night. When we reached Jerusalem, the brothers there gave us a hearty welcome. On the next day we went with Paul to see James, and all the elders came in. Paul greeted them warmly and gave a detailed account of what God had done among the heathen through his efforts. They praised God when they heard it, and they said to him,

“You see, brother, how many thousand believers there are among the Jews, all of them zealous upholders of the Law. They have been told that you teach all Jews who live among the heathen to turn away from Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children nor to observe the old customs. What then? They will be sure to hear that you have come. So do what we tell you. We have four men here who are under a vow. Join them, undergo the rites of purification with them, and pay their expenses so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will understand that there is no truth in the stories about you, but that you yourself observe the Law. As for the heathen who have become believers, we have written them our decision that they must avoid anything that has been contaminated by idols, the tasting of blood, the meat of strangled animals, and immorality.”

Then Paul joined the men and went through the rites of purification with them and the next day went to the Temple to give notice of the time when, upon the offering of the sacrifice for each one of them, their days of purification would be over.

The seven days were almost over when the Jews from Asia caught sight of him in the Temple, and stirred up all the crowd and seized him, shouting,

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“Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches everybody everywhere against our people and the Law and this place, and besides he has actually brought Greeks into the Temple and desecrated this sacred place.”

For they had previously seen Trophimus of Ephesus with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the Temple. The whole city was thrown into confusion, and the people hurried together, and seized Paul and dragged him outside of the Temple, the gates of which were immediately shut. They were trying to kill him when the news reached the colonel of the regiment that all Jerusalem was in a tumult. He immediately got some officers and men and hurried down among them, and when they saw the colonel and the soldiers they stopped beating Paul. Then the colonel came up and seized him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains, and then inquired who he was and what he had been doing. Some of the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and as he could not find out the facts on account of the confusion, he ordered him to be taken into the barracks. When Paul got to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers, on account of the violence of the mob, for the mass of people followed them shouting,

“Kill him!”

Just as they were going to take him into the barracks, Paul said to the colonel,

“May I say something to you?”

“Do you know Greek?” the colonel asked. “Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago raised the four thousand cut-throats and led them out into the desert?”

“I am a Jew,” Paul answered, “from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a

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citizen of no insignificant city. I beg you to let me speak to the people."

He gave him permission, and Paul standing on the steps made a gesture to the people, and when they had become quiet he spoke to them in Hebrew.

"Brothers and fathers," he said, "listen to what I have to say in my defense."

When they heard him speak to them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet, and he said,

"I am a Jew, and I was born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, but was brought up here in this city, and thoroughly educated under the teaching of Gamaliel in the Law of our forefathers. I was zealous for God, just as all of you are today. I persecuted this Way even to the death, and bound both men and women and put them in prison, as the high priest and the whole council will bear me witness. In fact, they gave me letters to the brothers in Damascus and I went there to bind those who were there and bring them back to Jerusalem to be punished. But on my way, as I was approaching Damascus, suddenly about noon, a blaze of light flashed around me from heaven, and I fell upon the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' I answered, 'Who are you, sir?' 'I am Jesus of Nazareth,' he said, 'whom you are persecuting.' The men who were with me saw the light, but they did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. Then I said, 'What am I to do, sir?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go into Damascus. There you will be told of all you are destined to do.' As I could not see, because of the dazzling light, my companions had to lead me by the hand, and so I reached Damascus. There a man named Ananias, a devout observer of the Law,

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highly respected by all the Jews who lived there, came to see me, and standing by my side, said to me, 'Saul, my brother, regain your sight!' Then instantly I regained my sight and looked at him, and he said, 'The God of our forefathers has appointed you to learn his will and to see his Righteous One and hear him speak, for you shall be his witness before all men of what you have seen and heard. And now, why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash out your sins, calling on his name.' After I had returned to Jerusalem, one day when I was praying in the Temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and leave Jerusalem at once, for they will not accept your evidence about me.' And I said, 'Lord, they know that I used to go through one synagogue after another, and to imprison and flog those who believed in you, and when the blood of your witness Stephen was being shed, I stood by and approved it, and took charge of the clothes of the men who killed him.' But he said to me, 'Go! I will send you far away to the heathen.' "

They had listened to him until he said that, but then they shouted,

"Kill him and get him out of the world! A creature like that ought not to be allowed to live!"

As they were shouting and throwing their clothes about and flinging dust into the air, the colonel ordered Paul brought into the barracks, and gave directions that he should be examined under the lash, so that he might find out why they made such an outcry against him. But when they had strapped him up, Paul said to the officer who was standing near,

"Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen, and without giving him a trial?"

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Upon hearing this, the officer went to the colonel and reported it.

“What do you propose to do?” he said. “This man is a Roman citizen.”

Then the colonel came to Paul and said,

“Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”

“Yes,” he said.

“I had to pay a large sum for my citizenship,” said the colonel.

“But I am a citizen by birth,” said Paul.

Then the men who had been going to examine him immediately left him, and the colonel himself was alarmed to find that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had had him bound.

The next day, as he wished to find out the real reason why the Jews denounced him, he had him unbound and ordered the high priests and the whole council to assemble, and took Paul down and brought him before them.

* * * * *

Knowing that part of them were Sadducees and part of them Pharisees, Paul called out in the council,

“Brothers, I am a Pharisee, and the son of Pharisees! It is for my hope for the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial!”

When he said that, a dispute arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the meeting was divided. For the Sadducees hold that there is no resurrection and that there are no angels or spirits, while the Pharisees believe in all three. So there was a great uproar, and some scribes of the Pharisees’ party got up and insisted,

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“We find nothing wrong with this man. Suppose some spirit or angel really spoke to him!”

As the dispute was becoming violent, the colonel began to be afraid that they would tear Paul in pieces, and ordered the soldiers to go down and get him away from them and bring him into the barracks.

On the following night the Lord stood beside him and said, “Courage! For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, you must testify in Rome also.”

In the morning, the Jews made a conspiracy and took an oath not to eat or drink till they had killed Paul. There were more than forty of them involved in this plot, and they went to the high priests and elders and said to them,

“We have taken a solemn oath not to touch anything to eat till we have killed Paul. Now you and the council must suggest to the colonel that he should have Paul brought down to you, as you mean to look into his case more carefully, and we will be ready to kill him before he gets down.”

But Paul’s nephew heard of the plot, and he came and got into the barracks, and told Paul. Paul called one of the officers and said to him,

“Take this young man to the colonel, for he has something to tell him.”

So he took him to the colonel, and said,

“The prisoner Paul called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you.”

So the colonel took him by the arm and stepping aside where they could be alone, asked,

“What is it that you have to tell me?”

“The Jews,” he answered, “have agreed to ask you to bring

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Paul down to the council tomorrow, on the ground that you mean to have a fuller inquiry made into his case. But do not let them persuade you, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him, and they have taken an oath not to eat or drink till they have killed him. They are all ready now, and are only waiting to get your promise."

So the colonel sent the youth away, directing him not to tell anyone that he had given him this information. Then he called in two of his officers and said to them,

"Get two hundred men ready to march to Caesarea, with seventy mounted men and two hundred spearmen, by nine o'clock tonight." They were also to provide horses for Paul to ride, so that they might take him in safety to Felix, the governor, to whom he wrote a letter to this effect:

"Claudius Lysias sends greetings to his Excellency Felix, the governor. This man had been seized by the Jews and they were just going to kill him when I came upon them with my men and rescued him, as I had learned that he was a Roman citizen. As I wanted to learn what charge they made against him, I had him brought before their council, and found that their accusations had to do with questions about their Law, but that he was not charged with anything that would call for his death or imprisonment. As I have been informed that a plot against him is brewing, I am sending him on to you at once, and directing his accusers to present their charges against him before you."

Then the soldiers took Paul, as they had been ordered to do, and escorted him as far as Antipatris that night. The next day, they returned to the barracks, leaving the mounted men to go on with him, and they on reaching Caesarea delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. After reading

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the letter, he asked Paul what province he belonged to, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, he said,

“I will hear your case as soon as your accusers arrive.”

And he gave orders that he should be kept in Herod’s palace.

* * * * *

But when two whole years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and as he wanted to gratify the Jews, Felix left Paul in prison.



PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

Though Paul had never been in Rome, he could call himself a Roman citizen, and that gave him certain rights not possessed by most people. One of these was the right to be tried by the emperor's own court in Rome if any serious charge was brought against him. So when a new governor was sent out from Rome to Judea and Paul was brought before him to be sent up to Jerusalem for trial, he refused to go and claimed his right as a Roman citizen to be tried before the emperor. This took his case out of the governor's hands.

A few days later a Jewish prince named Agrippa, whom the Romans had given a little kingdom in the north of Palestine, came with his sister to visit the new governor; and perhaps to entertain them, or perhaps to get a clearer statement of Paul's case, the governor suggested that they should give Paul a hearing. His appearance before Agrippa and his court is one of the great scenes in Paul's eventful life.

THREE DAYS AFTER HIS ARRIVAL in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, and the high priests and Jewish leaders presented their charges against Paul, and begged him as a favor to order Paul to come to Jerusalem, plotting to kill him on the way. Festus answered that Paul was being kept in custody at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there soon.

“So have your principal men go down with me,” he said, “and present charges against the man, if there is anything wrong with him.”

After staying only eight or ten days there, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day took his place in the judge’s chair, and ordered Paul brought in. When he came, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem surrounded him, and made a number of serious charges against him, which they could not substantiate. Paul said in his own defense,

“I have committed no offense against the Jewish Law or the Temple or the emperor.”

Then Festus, wishing to gratify the Jews, said to Paul, “Will you go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?”

But Paul said,

“I am standing before the emperor’s court, where I ought to be tried. I have done the Jews no wrong, as you can easily see. If I am guilty and have done anything that deserves death, I do not refuse to die; but if there is no truth in the charges that these men make against me, no one can give me up to them; I appeal to the emperor.”

Then Festus after conferring with the council answered,

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“You have appealed to the emperor, and to the emperor you shall go!”

Some time after, King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea on a state visit to Festus, and as they stayed there several days, Festus laid Paul’s case before the king.

“There is a man here,” he said, “who was left in prison by Felix, and when I was at Jerusalem the Jewish high priests and elders presented their case against him, and asked for his conviction. I told them that it was not the Roman custom to give anybody up until the accused met his accusers face to face and had a chance to defend himself against their accusations. So they came back here with me and the next day without losing any time I took my place in the judge’s chair and ordered the man brought in. But when his accusers got up, they did not charge him with any such crimes as I had expected. Their differences with him were about their own religion and about a certain Jesus who had died but who Paul said was alive. I was at a loss as to how to investigate such matters, and I asked him if he would like to go to Jerusalem and be tried on these charges there. But Paul appealed to have his case reserved for his Majesty’s decision, and I have ordered him kept in custody until I can send him to the emperor.”

“I should like to hear the man myself,” Agrippa said to Festus.

“You shall hear him tomorrow,” Festus answered.

So the next day, Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and went into the audience-room attended by officers and the leading citizens of the town, and at the command of Festus Paul was brought in. Then Festus said,

“King Agrippa and all who are present, you see here the

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

man about whom the whole Jewish people have applied to me both at Jerusalem and here, clamoring that he ought not to live any longer. I could not find that he had done anything for which he deserved death, but as he appealed to his Majesty I decided to send him to him. Yet I have nothing definite to write to our sovereign about him. So I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, in order to get from your examination of him something to put in writing. For it seems to me absurd to send a prisoner on, without stating the charges against him."

Then Agrippa said to Paul,

"You are at liberty to speak in your own defense."

So Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense.

"I think myself fortunate, King Agrippa," said he, "that it is before you that I am to defend myself today against all the things the Jews charge me with, especially because you are so familiar with all the Jewish customs and questions. I beg you, therefore, to listen to me with patience. The way I lived from my youth up, spending my early life among my own nation and at Jerusalem, is well known to all Jews, for they have known from the first, if they are willing to give evidence, that I was a Pharisee and my life was that of the strictest sect of our religion. Even now it is for my hope in the promise that God made to our forefathers that I stand here on trial, the promise in the hope of seeing which fulfilled our twelve tribes serve God zealously night and day. It is about this hope, your Majesty, that I am accused by some Jews. Why do you all think it incredible that God should raise the dead? I once thought it my duty vigorously to oppose the cause of Jesus of Nazareth. That was what I did at Jerusalem when on the authority of the

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high priests I put many of God's people in prison. When they were put to death, I cast my vote against them, and many a time in all the synagogues I had them punished, and tried to force them to say impious things. In my extreme rage against them I even pursued them to distant towns. I was once going to Damascus on this business, authorized and commissioned by the high priests, when on the road at noon, your Majesty, I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun flash around me and my fellow-travelers. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice say to me in Hebrew, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me? You cannot kick against the goad!' 'Who are you, sir?' said I. The Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for the express purpose of appointing you to serve me and to testify to what you have seen and to the visions you will have of me. I will save you from your people and from the heathen, to whom I will send you to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light and from Satan's control to God, so that they may have their sins forgiven and have a place among those who are consecrated through faith in me.' Therefore, King Agrippa, I did not disobey that heavenly vision, but first to the people of Damascus and Jerusalem and then all over Judea, and even to the heathen I preached that they must repent and turn to God and live as men who have repented should. That is why the Jews seized me in the Temple and tried to kill me. To this day I have had God's help, and I stand here to testify to high and low alike, without adding a thing to what Moses and the prophets declared would happen, if the Christ was to suffer and by being the first to rise from the dead was to proclaim the light to our people and to the heathen."

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As he said this in his defense, Festus called out,
“You are raving, Paul! Your great learning is driving you
mad!”

“I am not raving, your Excellency Festus,” said Paul, “I am
telling the sober truth. The king knows about this, and I can
speak to him with freedom. I do not believe that he missed any
of this, for it did not happen in a corner! King Agrippa, do
you believe the prophets? I know that you do!”

“You are in a hurry to persuade me and make a Christian
of me!” Agrippa said to Paul.

“In a hurry or not,” said Paul, “I would to God that not
only you, but all who hear me today, might be what I am—ex-
cept for these chains!”

Then the king rose, with the governor and Bernice and those
who had sat with them, and after leaving the room, in talking
the matter over together, they said,

“This man has not done anything to deserve death or im-
prisonment.”

“He might have been set at liberty,” said Agrippa to Festus,
“if he had not appealed to the emperor.”



PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME

Paul's hearing before Agrippa did not dispose of his case, for now that he had appealed to the emperor's court at Rome, he had to be sent there for trial. In those days people thought it was dangerous to sail on the Mediterranean Sea after the middle of September. Paul's guards started with him for Rome just as navigation was becoming dangerous, and their ship was caught in a storm and wrecked. They managed to reach shore on the island of Malta, where they spent the winter. It was not until the following spring that Paul arrived in Rome. Luke made the voyage with him, and tells the story.

WHEN IT WAS DECIDED that we were to sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were turned over to an officer of the Imperial regiment, named Julius. We went on board an Adramyttian ship bound for the ports of Asia, and put to sea. We had a Macedonian from Thessalonica, named Aristarchus, with us. The next day we put in at Sidon, and

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Julius kindly allowed Paul to go and see his friends and be taken care of. Putting to sea from there, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, as the wind was against us, and after traversing the Cilician and Pamphylian waters, we reached Myra in Lycia. There the officer found an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy, and put us on board her. For a number of days we made slow progress and had some difficulty in arriving off Cnidus. Then as the wind kept us from going on, we sailed under the lee of Crete, off Cape Salmone, and with difficulty coasted along it and reached a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

As a great deal of time had now passed, and navigation had become dangerous, for the autumn fast was already over, Paul began to warn them.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “I see that this voyage is likely to end in disaster and heavy loss, not only to ship and cargo but to our own lives also.”

But the officer was more influenced by the pilot and the captain than by what Paul had to say, and as the harbor was not fit to winter in, the majority favored putting to sea again, in the hope of being able to reach and winter in Phoenix, a harbor in Crete facing west-south-west and west-north-west. When a moderate south wind sprang up, thinking their object was within reach, they weighed anchor, and ran close along the coast of Crete. But very soon a violent wind which they call a North-easter rushed down from it. The ship was caught by it and could not face the wind, so we gave way and let her run before it. As we passed under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with great difficulty to secure the ship’s boat. After hoisting it on board, they used ropes to brace the ship, and as they were afraid of being cast on the Syrtis banks, they lowered

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the sail, and let the ship drift. The next day, as the storm continued to be violent, they began to throw the cargo overboard, and on the next, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. For a number of days neither the sun nor the stars were visible, and the storm continued to rage, until at last we gave up all hope of being saved. Then, when they had gone a long time without food, Paul got up among them, and said,

“Gentlemen, you ought to have listened to me and not to have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. Even now, I beg you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For last night an angel of the God I belong to and serve stood before me, and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul! You must stand before the emperor, and see! God has given you the lives of all the people who are on the ship with you.’ So keep up your courage, gentlemen! For I have faith in God that it will be just as I was told. But we are to be stranded on some island.”

It was the fourteenth night of the storm, and we were drifting through the Adriatic when about midnight the sailors began to suspect that there was land ahead. On taking soundings, they found a depth of twenty fathoms, and a little later, taking soundings again, they found a depth of fifteen. Then as they were afraid we might go on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and waited anxiously for daylight. The sailors wanted to escape from the ship, and actually lowered the boat into the sea, pretending that they were going to run out anchors from the bow, but Paul said to the officers and the soldiers,

“You cannot be saved unless these men stay on board.”

Then the soldiers cut the ropes that held the boat and let it

PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME

drift away. Until daybreak Paul kept urging them all to take something to eat.

"For fourteen days," he said, "you have been constantly on the watch, without taking anything to eat. I beg you to eat something; it is necessary for your safety. For not one of you will lose even a hair of his head."

With these words he took some bread and after thanking God for it before them all, he broke it in pieces and began to eat it. This raised the spirits of all of them, and they took something to eat. There were about seventy-six of us on board. When they had had enough to eat, they threw the wheat into the sea, in order to lighten the ship. When daylight came they could not recognize the coast, but they saw a bay with a beach and determined to run the ship ashore there if possible. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time they undid the lashings of the steering oars, and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But they struck a shoal and ran the ship aground. The bow struck and could not be moved, while the stern began to break up under the strain. The soldiers proposed to kill the prisoners, for fear some of them might swim ashore and escape, but the officer wanted to save Paul, and so he prevented them from doing this, and ordered all who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land, and the rest to follow on planks or other pieces of wreckage. So they all got safely to land.

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When we reached Rome, Paul was given permission to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

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So he stayed for two full years in rented lodgings of his own, and welcomed everybody who came to see him, preaching the Kingdom of God to them and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ openly and unhindered.



PAUL'S LETTERS TO CORINTH

Among the most interesting letters Paul wrote to his Christian friends in the cities where he had preached the gospel are the ones to the Christians at Corinth, who had written to him to ask his advice. Some of the Corinthians would get so excited in church that they would break out into a meaningless babbling, which almost broke up the meeting. The Corinthians regarded this as a religious gift and did not know how to stop it, so they asked Paul what to do. Paul did not forbid it but showed them the deeper principle of love and Christian courtesy that must control all our actions.

I WILL SHOW YOU A FAR BETTER WAY. If I can speak the languages of men and even of angels, but have no love, I am only a noisy gong or a clashing cymbal. If I am inspired to preach and know all the secret truths and possess all knowledge, and if I have such perfect faith that I can move mountains, but have no love, I am nothing. Even if I give away everything

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I own, and give myself up, but do it in pride, not love, it does me no good. Love is patient and kind. Love is not envious or boastful. It does not put on airs. It is not rude. It does not insist on its rights. It does not become angry. It is not resentful. It is not happy over injustice, it is only happy with truth. It will bear anything, believe anything, hope for anything, endure anything. Love will never die out. If there is inspired preaching, it will pass away. If there is ecstatic speaking, it will cease. If there is knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our preaching is imperfect. But when perfection comes, what is imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside my childish ways. For now we are looking at a dim reflection in a mirror, but then we shall see face to face. Now my knowledge is imperfect, but then I shall know as fully as God knows me. So faith, hope, and love endure. These are the great three, and the greatest of them is love.

You must pursue love, while you are cultivating the spiritual endowments, and especially inspired preaching. For anyone who speaks ecstatically is speaking not to men but to God, for no one can understand him, though he is uttering secret truths. But the inspired preacher does his fellow-men good and encourages and comforts them. Anyone who speaks ecstatically does himself good, but the inspired preacher does a congregation good. I want you all to speak ecstatically, but I especially want you to be inspired to preach. The man who is inspired to preach is more useful than the one who speaks ecstatically—unless he can explain what he says so that it may do the church some good.



ONESIMUS THE RUNAWAY

When Paul was in Rome waiting for his trial, a boy named Onesimus came to see him and they became friends. Paul was very fond of this boy and wanted to keep him with him. But Onesimus was a runaway slave, and Paul persuaded him to go back and ask the forgiveness of his master Philemon. This is the letter that Paul wrote for Onesimus to take with him to Philemon.

PAUL, A PRISONER FOR JESUS CHRIST, and brother Timothy, to our dear fellow-worker Philemon, and our sister Apphia, and our fellow-soldier Archippus, and the church that meets in your house; God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ bless you and give you peace.

I never mention you in my prayers without thanking my God for what I hear of the love and faith you have in the Lord Jesus and all his people, and I pray that through coming to

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know every good thing about us as Christians they may effectually share your faith. I have been greatly pleased and encouraged over your love, for the hearts of God's people have been cheered, my brother, by you.

So although as a Christian I feel quite free to order you to do what ought to be done, I prefer to appeal to you in the name of love, simply as what I am—Paul, no less an envoy of Christ Jesus, though now a prisoner for him. I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whose father I have become here in prison. Once you found him useless, but now he has become useful to you and to me, and now that I send him back to you, it is like sending my very heart. I would have liked to keep him with me, to wait on me in your place while I am in prison for the good news, but I do not wish to do anything without your consent, so that your kindness might be voluntary, and not have the appearance of compulsion. For perhaps this is why you and he were parted for a while, that you might have him back forever, not as a slave any longer but more than a slave, a dear brother—dear especially to me, but how much dearer to you, both as a man and as a Christian! So if you regard me as a comrade, welcome him as you would me. And if he has caused you any loss or owes you anything, charge it to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—not to mention the fact that you owe me your very self besides. Come, brother, let me make something out of you, in a Christian sense! Cheer my heart as a Christian.

I write you in full reliance upon your obedience; I know that you will do even more than I ask. And get ready to entertain me too, for I hope that I shall be restored to you, in answer to your prayers.

ONESIMUS THE RUNAWAY

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner for Christ Jesus, wishes to be remembered to you, and so do my fellow-workers, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke.

The blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits.



THE TRUE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

The picture of the Vine and the Branches shows in a striking figure the Christians' relation to Jesus. Only as they remain united to him and filled with his spirit of hopeful service can they accomplish anything of real value in the world. His spirit was a spirit of love, such love as will lay down its life for its friends. They are to be his friends. By this spirit of love they are united to him and to one another.

“I AM THE TRUE VINE, and my Father is the cultivator. Any branch of mine that does not bear fruit he trims away, and he prunes every branch that bears fruit, to make it bear more. You are pruned already because of the teaching that I have given you. You must remain united to me and I will remain united to you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself unless it remains united to the vine, you cannot unless you re-

THE TRUE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

main united to me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Anyone who remains united to me, with me united to him, will be very fruitful, for you cannot do anything apart from me. Anyone who does not remain united to me is thrown away like a branch and withers up, and they gather them and throw them into the fire and burn them. If you remain united to me and my words remain in your hearts, ask for whatever you please and you shall have it. When you are very fruitful and show yourselves to be disciples of mine, my Father is honored. I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. You must retain my love. If you keep my commands you will retain my love, just as I have observed the Father's commands and retain his love. I have told you all this so that you may have the happiness that I have had, and your happiness may be complete. The command that I give you is to love one another just as I have loved you. No one can show greater love than by giving up his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you to do. I do not call you slaves any longer, for a slave does not know what his master is doing, but now I call you friends, for I have made known to you everything that I have learned from my Father. It was not you who chose me, it is I that have chosen you, and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that shall be lasting, so that the Father may grant you whatever you ask him for as my followers.

“What I command you to do is to love one another.”



THE HEAVENLY CITY

Before many years had passed the Christians found themselves in conflict with the great powerful Roman empire, in which they lived. The government had ordered the people of the empire to include the emperor among the gods they worshiped, and of course the Christians could not do this. So to encourage them in this dangerous time, and to warn them against any kind of compromise, the prophet John, who was in exile on the island of Patmos, wrote to the Christians in the cities near Ephesus the little book we know as the Revelation. In it he described to them a heavenly city, more splendid than any on earth, which was to be their home. The cities of Asia, where they lived, were built of glistening marble, richly sculptured, but they were not to be compared to this glorious city of gold, with its walls of jasper and its gates of pearl.

THE HEAVENLY CITY

THEN I SAW A NEW HEAVEN and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. And I saw the new Jerusalem, the holy city, come down out of heaven from God, like a bride dressed and ready to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne say,

“See! God’s dwelling is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them, and he will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no death any longer, nor any grief or crying or pain. The old order has passed away.”

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Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke to me.

“Come,” he said, “I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

He carried me away in a trance to a great, high mountain, and showed me Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God, in all the glory of God. It shone with a radiance like that of some very precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, which had carved upon them the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the Lamb’s twelve apostles. The angel who talked with me had a gold measuring rod, with which to meas-

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ure the city and its gates and wall. The city was a square, its length the same as its breadth. He measured the city with his rod, and it was 12,000 furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height were the same. He measured the wall and it was about 144 cubits (216 feet), as men measure, for that was the way the angel measured. The material of the wall was jasper, but the city was pure gold, as transparent as glass. The foundation stones of the wall of the city were ornamented with all kinds of precious stones. The first foundation stone was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topáz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls; each gate made of a single pearl. The principal street of the city was pure gold, as transparent as glass. I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun nor the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God lighted it, and the Lamb is its lamp. The heathen will walk by its light. The kings of the earth will bring their splendor to it. Its gates will never be shut by day—for there will be no night there—and they will bring the splendor and the wealth of the heathen into it. Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who indulges in abominable practices and falsehoods, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

THE CHRISTIANS' LIBRARY

The Christians like the Jews had a little library of the books they most loved and valued. We call it the New Testament. It began with the Gospels, with their stories of Jesus, and included some of the letters written by Paul, and the Acts of the Apostles, which told so much about his travels and adventures. Altogether it made a collection of twenty-seven books, though some of them are only a page long.

The Gospel according to Matthew

The Gospel according to Mark

The Gospel according to Luke

The Gospel according to John

The Acts of the Apostles

The Letter to the Romans

The First Letter to the Corinthians

The Second Letter to the Corinthians

The Letter to the Galatians

The Letter to the Ephesians

The Letter to the Philippians

The Letter to the Colossians

The First Letter to the Thessalonians

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The Second Letter to the Thessalonians

The First Letter to Timothy

The Second Letter to Timothy

The Letter to Titus

The Letter to Philemon

The Letter to the Hebrews

The Letter of James

The First Letter of Peter

The Second Letter of Peter

The First Letter of John

The Second Letter of John

The Third Letter of John

The Letter of Jude

The Revelation of John

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